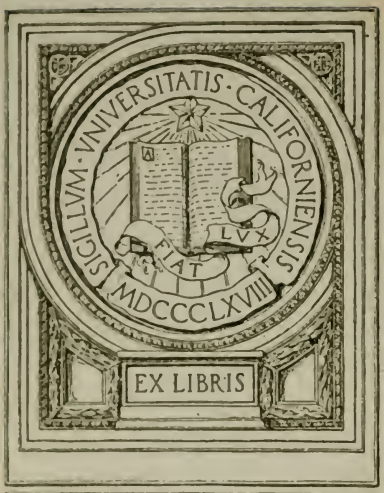
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A CENTURY OF FAMOUS ACTRESSES

1750–1850

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MRS. SIDDONS AS LADY MACBETH.

A CENTURY OF FAMOUS ACTRESSES

1750–1850

BY

HAROLD SIMPSON

AUTHOR OF "A CENTURY OF BALLADS," ETC.

AND

MRS. CHARLES BRAUN

WITH EIGHTEEN ILLUSTRATIONS

MILLS & BOON, LIMITED

49 RUPERT STREET

LONDON W.

PREFACE

This book is not an attempt at exhaustive biography, nor does it aim at a critical analysis of the actress's art.

It is, rather, a collection of character studies; little pen-pictures of the famous women of the theatre during the period which it covers, and of the parts they played on and off the stage.

At the same time it is hoped that it may be found to provide, in a concise form, a reliable bird's-eye view of the times with which it deals, and of the *dramatis personæ* who flit across its pages.

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A CENTURY OF FAMOUS ACTRESSES

CHAPTER I

THOSE THAT CAME BEFORE

"WHEREAS the women's parts in plays have hitherto been acted by men in the habits of women, at which some have taken offence, we do permit and give leave for the time to come, that all women's parts be acted by women."

This decree of His Majesty King Charles II was issued a little less than a century before the commencement of the period during which the actresses who form the subject of this book flourished upon the boards. From the earliest establishment of the stage until after the Restoration, the "female" players had been boys, or young men. This ridiculous custom was now to be abolished. It had received its death-blow in 1629, when a French company, with women among them, came over to London and established themselves at Blackfriars. In spite of the fact that the women were, according to Thomas Brand, "hissed, hooted, and pippin-pelted from the stage," a proceeding which

seems to have afforded this staunch Puritan the liveliest satisfaction, the arrangement by which women's parts were able to receive an interpretation so much more in accordance with the intentions of their creators, had only to be seen to be appreciated. The new custom, however, crept in but slowly. The "*Court Beggar*" was acted at the old Cockpit in 1732. In the last act *Lady Strangelove* is made to say "the boy's a pretty actor, and his mother can play her part—women-actors now grow in request." In 1639, Freshwater, speaking of the plays in Paris, said: "Yet the women are the best actors; they play their own parts, a thing much to be desired in England." At the Restoration, when Rhodes was permitted to re-open the stage which had been decimated by the Puritans, he could only gather about him a company composed entirely of men. The public, by this time thoroughly hankering after the new foreign custom, would have none of these male heroines of tragedy, some of whom were past forty, and whose beards had to be shaved before they could come on to the stage. The universal dissatisfaction expressed is said to have been the reason for the decree which is quoted at the beginning of this chapter. The clause was inserted in the respective patents granted to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant, two gentlemen of the Court. These patents permitted two theatres in London, and no more.

No sooner was the new fashion authorized by supreme authority, than actresses seemed to spring up out of the ground like mushrooms. Killigrew's company contained quite a respectable number of them, including Margaret Hughes and Ann Marshall, one of whom, probably, had the honour of being the first professional English actress. Davenant's

company included Mrs. Davenport and Miss Saunderson, the latter of whom afterwards became Mrs. Betterton.

Upon the roll of stage heroines that stretches out behind those who were at their zenith in 1750, and before the days of Woffington, Bellamy, Cibber, Clive, and the rest, we find inscribed an astonishing number of illustrious names, considering how comparatively recently the new custom had been introduced. From Mrs. Boutell and Nell Gwynn, who used to speak her epilogues under a hat "as large as a cartwheel," the eye moves on until it is held by the name of Elizabeth Barry, who lies buried in Westminster Cloisters. The original *Monimia* of Otway's "*Orphan*," and the *Calista* of Rowe's "*Fair Penitent*," she was born in 1658, and after an extraordinarily brilliant career, passed over to the great majority in 1713. At her "benefits" gold and jewels used to be showered upon her like water. It was she who was the origin of the "benefit" system. Hitherto it had been confined to authors, but in recognition of her merit, King James commanded one to be given in her behalf, a precedent which very soon passed into a custom.

Mrs. Percival, afterwards Mrs. Mountfort, and finally Mrs. Verbruggen, was a comedy actress whose name stands out conspicuously at this period. She was born in 1669 and died in 1701. Colley Cibber in his "Apology" has handed down to us a very beautiful and moving description of her grace and charm. As Mrs. Percival, she originated *Nell* in "*The Devil to Pay*"; as Mrs. Mountfort, *Belinda* in "*The Old Batchelor*"; and as Mrs. Verbruggen, *Charlotte Welldon* in "*Oroonoko*," and *Lady Lurewell* in "*The Constant Couple*." These were all well-known and favourite

characters which we shall have occasion to mention many times in the course of subsequent chapters. A few years older than Mrs. Mountfort, Mrs. Bracegirdle was on the stage from 1680 to 1707. When only six years old she played the part of the *Page* at the original production of the "*Orphan*," when the "great Mrs. Barry" created the part of *Monimia*. Mrs. Barry was struck by her early promise, and gave her considerable assistance and encouragement. It was for her that Congreve wrote his "*Way of the World*," in order that she might play *Millamant*, another very favourite part with her successors in later days. Mrs. Bracegirdle was adored by wits, poets, dramatists, and peers. She was one of the most brilliant actresses of her day, and possessed the distinction of being as virtuous as she was beautiful and famous. She lived to a great age, retiring in 1707 to a well-earned leisure, made pleasant by a large circle of friends. She was still living when the new generation of actors and actresses—Garrick, Woffington, Clive, Mrs. Pritchard, and the others—were claiming the plaudits of the public. Colley Cibber and she were regular old cronies. He was but eight or ten years younger than she was, although he out-lived her by nearly a score of years. She was generous in her judgment with regard to the new-comers who succeeded her. For Mrs. Pritchard she had a great admiration. Once when she heard Colley Cibber making disparaging remarks about Garrick's playing of the part of *Bayes*, she tapped the old actor's arm with her fan. "Come, come, Cibber," said she, "tell me if there is not something like envy in your character of this young gentleman. The actor who pleases everybody must be a man of merit." Colley smiled, and taking a pinch of

snuff, replied, "Faith, Bracey, I believe you are right; the young fellow *is* clever!" When Mrs. Bracegirdle died in 1748, the old man was inconsolable. Her successor as prime stage favourite was "Nance" Oldfield, with whom she played at the Haymarket in the season of 1706–7. Born in 1683, Ann Oldfield was the original *Lady Betty Modish* in Colley Cibber's famous comedy, "*The Careless Husband*," and also of *Biddy Tipkin* in Steele's "*Tender Husband*." She is said to have had no successor absolutely as perfect in these parts as she was. She was the original representative of no less than sixty-five characters, and, although she preferred comedy, she was equally good in tragedy. She literally dances her way through the theatrical records of this time; her name is a tradition of the stage. When she died, in 1730, she had a funeral that a queen might have envied. There was first a solemn lying-in-state in the Jerusalem Chamber, where the public thronged to see the spectacle. Afterwards she was carried to her grave at the west end of the south aisle in Westminster Abbey, among the supporters of the pall being Lord Hervey, Lord Delawarr, and Bubb Dodington, afterwards Lord Melcombe.

Mrs. Porter—the friend of Mrs. Barry, Mrs. Bracegirdle, and Ann Oldfield—was left undisputed queen after this triplet of stars had retired from the stage. She made her first appearance in 1699, and was the genuine successor to Mrs. Barry, to whom she had played the "confidantes" in tragedy. She was the original creator of *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*." Although she lived until 1765, she retired from the stage in 1743. Mrs. Horton, who retired in 1750, was more remembered in after years for her glorious beauty than

for her acting. She was an artificial actress, and although regarded by Wilks as the legitimate successor to Nance Oldfield, she was, as a matter of fact, entirely outclassed by Peg Woffington and Mrs. Pritchard. These last two, together with Kitty Clive, Mrs. Cibber, George Anne Bellamy, and Mrs. Yates, all appeared upon the boards long before the beginning of the half-century, but as they were at the height of their popularity then, they will be dealt with in this book as legitimately belonging to the period which it covers.

In 1750 the two patents granted by Charles II to Thomas Killigrew and Sir William Davenant were in the possession of Drury Lane and Covent Garden. These two theatres enjoyed a complete monopoly, being allowed to present tragedy, comedy, opera, or variety entertainments as they chose. The only other theatres existing in the West End at the time were the King's theatre—built by Sir John Vanbrugh in the Haymarket in 1705, and devoted entirely to opera—and the "little theatre" in the Haymarket, destined in later years to be rich in memories of famous actors and dramatists, but, at the period with which we are dealing, not in possession of a licence to perform stage plays. This theatre, to be hereafter alluded to as "the Haymarket," was built in 1720, and fluctuated between conjuring entertainments, performing animals, and variety shows—with occasional lawless excursions into the forbidden domain of "legitimate" drama—until 1766, when, through the influence of the Duke of York, Samuel Foote obtained a licence for it. This licence was, however, limited to the summer months, so as not to clash with the winter seasons of its two great rivals.

The theatrical season of 1750–1 stands out in the annals of the stage as the famous "'Romeo and Juliet' Season" at Drury Lane and Covent Garden. Deadly rivalry existed between the two patent theatres at this time, and when both of them advertised "*Romeo and Juliet*" for the same night, the public was provided with a tit-bit of theatrical gossip that lasted until long after the actual performances had become ancient history.

To understand this rivalry fully we must take a glance at the condition of the stage of the time. It happened to be particularly rich in actors and actresses of supreme excellence. The names of the ladies who were in their prime have already been given, whilst Garrick, Barry, Woodward, Quin, and Macklin, to name only a few of the actors, formed a phalanx of such indisputable merit that there is no occasion to do more than recall them to mind. When we remember that all these performers were divided amongst two companies only, we get an idea of the high standard which prevailed, and of the not unnatural rivalry and jealousy which resulted. Contending managers fought for supremacy with the public, and frantically tried to outbid each other for the possession of this or that star actor or actress. The search for novelties was persistent. If new plays of sufficient merit were not forthcoming, new ways of presenting old ones were dragged in to take their place. A frequent change of programme was essential. At a time when the only choice of an evening's entertainment lay between two theatres, a "run" of any length was an impossibility.

In 1747 Garrick had become joint patentee with Lacy, at Drury Lane. He was given a free hand in

the management, and not only did he receive his share of the profits, but a salary of five or six hundred a year into the bargain. Covent Garden, on the other hand, was presided over by Rich, who, when Garrick took over Drury Lane, relied principally upon the exertions of Ryan, the younger Cibber, the Griffiths, and Mrs. Horton. Needless to say, this company was not strong enough to stand up against Garrick, Barry, Macklin, Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Peg Woffington, and Mrs. Clive, at the other theatre; Garrick's victory was therefore won almost without a struggle. During the two following seasons, however, the seasons of 1748–9 and 1749-50, things began to level up. Rich's company was reinforced by the re-engagement of George Anne Bellamy, Quin, and of Peg Woffington, who, only too anxious to shake the dust of Drury Lane off her feet now that Garrick was to marry the Violante, also joined the ranks. To add to Garrick's difficulties, Mrs. Cibber got at loggerheads with him and retired in high dudgeon, whilst Barry, too, began to show signs of restlessness. He was, disgusted at continually having to play second fiddle to Garrick, and after a short period of wavering between the two houses, he finally went over to Covent Garden.

After this re-shuffling we come to the famous season of 1750–1. Barry and Macklin, with Mrs. Cibber and Peg Woffington, were at Covent Garden with Rich, whilst Garrick had Woodward, Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, and George Anne Bellamy. Honours were therefore more equally divided; no longer did one of the contending parties hold all the best cards in the pack. There was to be a fair fight and no favour, and the public, looking on with lively curiosity, settled

itself comfortably down to watch the vicissitudes of the game.

On the 8th September Garrick opened with the "*Merchant of Venice.*" At this performance Kitty Clive spoke the prologue, which was written by Garrick himself, and was designed to draw attention to the state of feeling existing between the two houses :—

> "Strengthened by new allies, our foes prepare,
> 'Cry havock, and let slip the dogs of war.'
> To shake our souls, the papers of the day
> Draw forth the adverse bands in dread array ;
> A power might shake the bravest to dismay.
> Yet, fearless still, we take the field with spirit,
> Armed cap-à-pie, in self-sufficient merit."

On the 24th of the same month, Covent Garden began its season with Macklin in the "*Miser.*" These preliminary skirmishes over, the battle was begun in real earnest. Both houses, as we have seen, advertised "*Romeo and Juliet*" for the *same night*, namely the 28th September, 1750. Public excitement being now thoroughly aroused by this bold unexpected move, people gaped at the play-bills all day long, speculating as to what would be the result of the contest. Here was a novelty indeed ! It was not a proceeding that they would care to see repeated often, but this occasion was quite a peculiar one, to which ordinary laws did not apply. Long before the appointed hour arrived, the public appetite had been whetted to the point of positive gluttony.

The Covent Garden bill was very elaborate, and held rich promise of providing additional sensation, in the shape of a grand funeral procession, with accompanying display. Here it is :—

BY THE COMPANY OF COMEDIANS.

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL IN COVENT GARDEN,

To-morrow, Sept. 28th, will be presented a Play, call'd

ROMEO AND JULIET.

The part of Romeo to be performed by Mr. Barry
(*being the first time of his appearing on that stage*)

And the part of Juliet to be performed by Mrs. Cibber.

An additional scene will be introduced, representing

The FUNERAL PROCESSION OF JULIET.

Which will be accompanied by a solemn DIRGE never performed before, and set to music by Dr. Arne,

With the proper Decorations incident to the play.

Boxes, 5s.; Pit, 3s.; FIRST GALLERY, 2s.; Upper Gallery, 1s.

To begin exactly at six o'clock.

The Drury Lane bill was as follows:—

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMPANY OF COMEDIANS.

AT THE THEATRE ROYAL IN DRURY LANE

This day, September 28th, will be revived a Play call'd

ROMEO AND JULIET.

The part of Romeo to be performed by Mr. Garrick
(*Being the first time of his appearing in that character*).

The part of MERCUTIO by Mr. Woodward.

And the part of Juliet to be performed by Miss Bellamy
(*being the first time of her appearing on that stage*).

With proper Decorations.

Boxes, 5s.; Pit, 3s.; Gallery, 2s; Upper Gallery, 1s.

It is hop'd that no Gentleman will take it ill that they cannot be admitted this Night upon the stage, or in the Orchestra, on account of the Scenery and Music that are made Use of in the Play.

It will be seen that the Drury Lane play-bill was more cunningly devised than that of its rival. Garrick was far too shrewd a manager not to see the possibilities of display afforded by the funeral procession, but although he had made his arrangements accordingly, he kept these a secret. Its pomps and vanities were to burst upon the audience with dazzling unexpectedness. The public discussion as to whether there would or would not be a funeral procession was to be but one more inducement to his patrons to come and see for themselves. The hint conveyed in his footnote to the bill is delightful, and betrays a master hand.

However, it must be confessed that when the play was once produced such accessories as funeral processions, music and scenery, became matters of quite secondary consideration. The rival Romeos and Juliets provided such abundant food for discussion and gave rise to such violent partisanship, that all other splendours of the respective productions faded into insignificance. The playgoers of the day were very soon split up into opposite camps. They rushed wildly from one theatre to the other. Sometimes they would attend one theatre for part of the play and then pass over to its rival to see the rest of the performance. There was no other topic of conversation in the whole town. Which was the finer *Romeo*—Barry or Garrick? Did Mrs. Cibber hold her own against her rival at Drury Lane? Questions such as these were upon every lip. Tongues wagged, hearts beat, heads were sometimes in danger of being broken, and, at the end of it all, a somewhat satiated public could not definitely award the palm to either couple. A lady commented as follows: "Had I been *Juliet* to Garrick's

Romeo, so ardent and impassioned was he, I should have expected he would have *come up* to me in the balcony; but had I been *Juliet* to Barry's *Romeo*, so tender, so eloquent, and so seductive was he, I should certainly have *gone down* to him!" This probably sums up the gist of the matter as far as the two Romeos are concerned.

As to the two Juliets, they may fairly be said to have divided the honours. Mrs. Cibber moved her audience to tears by her pathos and amazed them by her power and dignity. Bellamy swept them off their feet by her exhibition of rapturous love, her impetuosity, her despair. Mrs. Cibber was more tender, Bellamy more passionate. Mrs. Cibber thrilled the audience with the exquisite modulations of her beautiful voice, Bellamy subdued it by the power of her glowing loveliness. Both actresses had the advantage of good looks, although Mrs. Cibber's beauty being of the intellectual order she would probably move her audience to a less degree in the part of *Juliet* than would Bellamy. The latter, with her limpid blue eyes and glowing cheeks, her impetuosity and her greater youthfulness, undoubtedly had the advantage over her rival in this particular. She had been most carefully schooled in the part by Garrick, who considered her an ideal *Juliet*. She possessed, however, less natural grace than Mrs. Cibber, and, when all is said, there cannot have been much to choose between them.

The play was performed at both houses for twelve nights in succession, and then Mrs. Cibber declared herself too fatigued to carry on the contest any longer. Garrick, only too glad himself to get to an end of the business, gave it for just one more night to prove

unmistakably that he was the victor. This "run" was quite unprecedented, and the public, amused and excited at first, became decidedly bored before the end was reached. People who came up from the country found that if they wanted to attend a play, "*Romeo and Juliet*" they had to see, and if they wanted to go to the play a second time, "*Romeo and Juliet*" it had to be again. There was no getting away from it, nor from the everlasting discussion that went on about it. No wonder that every one became sick and tired not only of the play but of the very name of it. The public was heartily thankful when a change of theatrical programme was at last agreed upon.

The following lines, circulated at the time, doubtless reflected the sentiments of most people :—

"Well, what's to-night? says angry Ned,
As up from bed he rouses.
Romeo again! He shakes his head.
A pox on both your houses!"

CHAPTER II

THE RIVAL JULIETS

MRS. CIBBER

HANDEL'S oratorio "The Messiah" was being given in Dublin in the year 1741, when Dr. Delany, the friend of Swift, was so transported by the youthful charm and sweet voice of one of the singers, that he sprang excitedly to his feet and, stretching out his arms towards her, shouted: "Woman! Thy sins be forgiven thee."

The singer was Susanna Maria Cibber, with whose voice Handel had been so delighted that he had altered one of the arias in his oratorio, the better to suit it. Sister of Thomas Arne, the composer, Mrs. Cibber had been carefully trained by him with a view to the operatic stage. She had a melodious voice, and when, in 1732 as Miss Arne, she appeared in Lampe's opera "*Amelia*," at the Haymarket, she met with considerable success. This, however, was due rather to her youthfulness—she was little more than twenty years of age—and to her lithe graceful figure, than to her voice, which, though of pure quality and sweetness, was not of sufficient volume to be of the first rank. The next year she sang a song from "*Rosamond*" between the acts at Lincoln's Inn Fields. This proved to be so popular that it had to be repeated on several occasions.

Mrs. Cibber might have remained a mediocre singer for the rest of her life but for one circumstance—her marriage with Theophilus Cibber. This step, disastrous from a domestic point of view, she took in 1734. The rascally Theophilus proved to be a very bad bargain and was the cause of much loss of happiness from the very beginning—and loss of honour in the end. But it had other compensations. It brought her under the notice of that sound old actor, Colley Cibber, who, in spite of his first dislike of the marriage owing to the bride's lack of fortune, proved a very satisfactory father-in-law. He bluntly told the beautiful young woman that if her voice was not in the first rank, in singing it was as good as nothing, but that it might possibly prove of more use in acting. His amazement when he heard her recite a speaking part with the utmost facility, modulating her lovely tones with ease and throwing into the lines tenderness, dignity, and passion—can be imagined. Colley was beside himself with excitement, and throwing everything else to the winds for the time being, devoted himself heart and soul to the tuition of his promising pupil. Patient, docile, and persevering, Mrs. Cibber worked hard and advanced by leaps and bounds. Whole-heartedly grateful to the exacting old actor for all the pains he took with her, she yet used her own brains, and when her ideas did not coincide with his she did not scruple to reject that of which she disapproved.

On 12th January, 1736, she made her first appearance as an actress when "*Zara*" was produced at Drury Lane. Cast for the principal character, that of the name-part, she had to contend with some preliminary difficulties which might have caused the downfall of

an actress of inferior capacity. The part of *Osmun* was played by the nephew of the author, Aaron Hill. This young man was a novice, and proved to be entirely devoid of talent. So badly did he act that he was never allowed to repeat the performance, and for five nights the part had to be merely read. At the seventh performance, however, Mills, who had been feverishly studying the part, came to the rescue, and the play was triumphantly repeated for seven more nights.

In spite of these drawbacks, Mrs. Cibber's success was never for one moment in doubt. The whole house was carried away by emotion. Women wept; men were so stirred they could scarce remain in their places for excitement; even the other actors were deeply moved. The heart of Theophilus was so affected that he promptly demanded and obtained the doubling of his wife's salary.

For the next two years her fame steadily increased. She played a great number of characters, *Indiana* in Steele's "*Conscious Lovers*," *Belvidera* in Otway's "*Venice Preserved*," *Monimia* in "*The Orphan*," *Constance* in "*King John*," and *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*," being some of the more important. But the character in which she seems to have been universally acknowledged as being without a rival was *Ophelia*. Tate Wilkinson, in his Memoirs, tells us that "she was the best *Ophelia* that there ever was, either before or since—her singing, voice, figure and features, all combined to make her superior to anybody else; no eloquence can paint her distressed and distracted look when she said, 'Lord, we know what we are, but know not what we may be.'"

Macklin declared that Mrs. Cibber, in the expression

of love, grief, tenderness, and jealous rage, excelled all the actresses he had ever seen. Murphy wrote that in the mad scene of *Alicia* ("*Jane Shore*") "the expression of her countenance and the irresistible magic of her voice thrilled to the very soul of the whole audience."

Tate Wilkinson, born mimic as he was, confessed himself unable to reproduce her tones. The man who could take off Garrick, Quin, George Anne Bellamy, Peg Woffington and many others, found his talent fall flat when he attempted to approach the excellence of Mrs. Cibber. This, he says, "was of that superior kind that I can only retain her in my mind's eye."

Of Mrs. Cibber's powers as a tragedienne the critics of her time sent up a concerted pæan of praise. No actress has been more universally eulogized in this branch of her art. But in comedy, although some writers have attempted to gloss over her imperfections, she was admittedly a failure.

In 1738 Mrs. Cibber quitted Drury Lane, having quarrelled over a question of salary. For the next two years she lived in retirement at Windsor, in a house provided for her by Mr. Sloper, a gentleman for whose sake she left the home presided over by a man she found it impossible to respect.

There is little temptation to dwell upon this episode in her career. Her blackguard of a husband deserved and received no sympathy for the infidelity at which he had obviously connived. The marriage had been an unhappy one from the beginning. Theophilus looked upon his wife as a money-making machine, and nothing more. When Mr. Sloper presented himself at their establishment in the country as the friend of the husband, he was pressed to stay and encouraged to

play backgammon with Mrs. Cibber, and to help her to amuse herself, whilst Theophilus pursued his notorious amours in London. The sequel may be easily imagined. Mr. Sloper's purse was soon at the disposal of the husband, who would have been quite content to continue this *ménage à trois*, had his wife been willing. But she, loathing the false position in which she was placed, and despising with all her soul the wretched little worm she had married, made a bold bid for happiness and plunged into the open. Theophilus brought a suit for divorce, and it was heard on the 5th December, 1738. Mrs. Cibber and her lover were, of course, found guilty, but the contemptible husband, whose connivance was clearly proved, received only £10 damages, instead of the £5000 he demanded.

In Mrs. Cibber's defence, if defence were needed, it must be recorded that this was her only lapse from virtue. She made her home with Sloper, and remained faithful to him to the end. Their daughter, "Miss Cibber," was the innocent cause of one of the only affronts recorded as having been received by the couple as a result of their defiance of the conventions. This occurred at Bath in 1760, when Mrs. Cibber and her "protector" were there on a visit. A young lady protested against "Miss Cibber's" being led out to dance. A "scene" followed, in the course of which Mr. Sloper actually used his fists in defence of his offspring, and the affair very nearly developed into a riot. Beau Nash was appealed to, but that fastidious master of the ceremonies, being, as a matter of fact, the instigator of the affront, very naturally declined to interfere, and poor "Miss Cibber" was never asked to dance at Bath again. Before leaving the subject of Mrs. Cibber's

MRS. CIBBER IN KING LEAR.

domestic affairs, it is satisfactory to record that Theophilus Cibber, in 1758, went down to the bottom of the Irish Sea—together with a shipload of scenery, dancers, and pantomimists—and she was rid of this scoundrel for ever.

In 1741 Mrs. Cibber crossed to Ireland, where she made her first appearance as *Indiana* in the "*Conscious Lovers*," Quin playing *Young Bevil*. This was the precursor of a series of triumphs enjoyed by these two favourites in the Irish capital. *Monimia* and *Chamont* in "*The Orphan*," *The Lady* and *Comus* in "*The Masque of Comus*," *Isabella* and *The Duke* in "*Measure for Measure*," and *Elvira* and *The Spanish Friar* in Dryden's "*Spanish Friar*" were some of their successes at Aungier Street during this season. Mrs. Cibber was at that time at the very head of her profession, and had reached the position of eminence which she retained to the day of her death. Her salary for the season was three hundred pounds, at which sum she must have been exceedingly profitable to the management, owing to the enormous crowds she drew to the theatre. It is significant that on the first night there was not as much as £10 in the house.

In the following summer Mrs. Cibber returned to London, she and Theophilus having presumably cried a truce. Her husband's authority remained in force even after the divorce, and Theophilus, by no means willing to lose a share of the large sums she earned, spent a considerable part of his time bringing suits in the Commons and the Court of Chancery, until the poor woman was harassed beyond endurance. It was for this reason that she had accepted the Dublin engagement, nor would she return to London until her husband had consented to allow her to play at whatever

theatre she pleased and to remain sole mistress of her salary. In 1751 Theophilus seems to have contemplated another attempt to prevent his wife from acting in London, but was fortunately dissuaded by Benjamin Victor, who pointed out to him that the public would never stand being deprived of their favourite, and that he had therefore better leave his wife severely alone.

From 1742 Mrs. Cibber played either at Covent Garden or Drury Lane. She changed over from one company to the other with monotonous regularity until the season of 1752–3, when she settled down at Drury Lane and performed at no other theatre until her death in 1766. Thus in 1742 we find her at Covent Garden playing *Desdemona* to the *Othello* of Quin; in 1745 *Constance* to Garrick's *King John*. Mrs. Cibber's *Constance* was one of her finest performances, and ranks with her *Ophelia*. Garrick was at this time not fully alive to the extent of her genius, and accidentally meeting Quin at the Bedford Coffee House, he said that he doubted whether Mrs. Cibber would be able to do justice to so vigorous and trying a part as *Lady Constance*. Quin was indignant. "Don't tell me, Mr. Garrick!" he exclaimed with warmth; "that woman has a heart, and can do anything where passion is required." He was right. Mrs. Cibber's performance was inimitable, and roused the enthusiasm of her critics to fever heat. "To utter with the utmost harmony and propriety all the succeeding changes of grief, anger, resentment, rage, despondency, reviving courage and animated defiance incidental to *Lady Constance*," says Davies, "and to accompany them with correspondent propriety and vehemence of action, was a happiness only known to Mrs. Cibber." Again he says: "To speak the truth, Mrs. Cibber had no

successor in this part but Mrs. Yates, who yet, it must be confessed, notwithstanding her great and justly applauded skill, is inferior."

Even Theophilus Cibber, at a time when he was feeling particularly spiteful towards his wife, was obliged to confess that her performance was inimitable.

In 1746–7 Mrs. Cibber was back at Covent Garden, with Quin and Garrick to support her, and in the season 1747–8 once more at Drury Lane. Garrick had become joint patentee with Lacy this season, and Mrs. Cibber originated the part of *Fidelia* in Moore's "*Foundling*." The following season at the same theatre she created the part of *Aspasia* in Johnson's "*Irene*."

After resting for a year, during which her health began to cause her a good deal of anxiety, we find her at Covent Garden in 1750–1 playing *Juliet* to Barry's *Romeo*. Of the hot rivalry between her and George Anne Bellamy I have already spoken in the previous chapter. It was a season that will always be remembered as one of the most exciting in the annals of the stage.

When at the conclusion of the following season (1752–3) Mrs. Cibber and Barry separated, never to play together again, the Stage sustained an irreparable loss. They were the ideal *Romeo* and *Juliet*—Barry "the best lover that ever appeared upon the stage," and Susanna Cibber, of whom it was said that "in grief or tenderness her eyes looked as if they swam in tears; in rage and despair they seemed to dart flashes of fire." No wonder that the impressionable audience of those days, the audience that would sit bathed in tears for hours together and thoroughly enjoy the sensation, vowed that never would such a pair of lovers

be seen again upon the stage. On the occasions, only too frequent, when Mrs. Cibber's indisposition prevented her from attending at the theatre, Barry would flatly refuse to play *Romeo* to Mrs. Cibber's substitute —that "flat-baked pancake," Mrs. Ward.

The last time that Mrs. Cibber played *Juliet* to that particular *Romeo* was on Saturday, 24th May, 1753, when Covent Garden closed its season. Miss Nossiter, an actress in whom Barry had a tender interest, succeeded Mrs. Cibber in the part, but proved to be quite inadequate, her failure re-acting upon Barry and causing him to lose a little of the prestige he had so brilliantly gained.

For the rest of her life, as we have seen, Mrs. Cibber played at Drury Lane. At fifty years of age she played the part of *Coelia* in "*The School for Lovers*," in which she represented a young girl of sixteen. Once, when she was sitting in Garrick's room, spectacles on nose, reading the part, some one suggested that it would perhaps be better to call *Coelia* at least twenty-three. Mrs. Cibber looked up quietly with a smile and said she did not agree. When the night of the performance arrived no one could quarrel with her decision; she played the part with such youthful naturalness, such simplicity, and such charm, that those who came prepared to criticize went home confounded. Age seemed to make no difference to her fascination. She preserved her figure to the end, and was able to play youthful characters long after the age at which it was usual for actresses to be cast for old women parts.

During her last years at Drury Lane she was frequently absent through illness. Her doctors wrongly diagnosed her complaint, and when she died suddenly in 1766 of a serious internal malady, both the public

and the doctors were completely taken by surprise. His Majesty George III was the indirect cause of her death. He commanded a performance of "*The Provoked Wife*," in which she was to play *Lady Brute*, and Mrs. Cibber, fearful lest an excuse on the score of illness might be construed as being a slight upon his Protestantism, she being an ardent Roman Catholic, insisted upon carrying out the command, although her strength was greatly reduced by illness. This proved to be the last effort of which she was capable, and the stage knew her no more. Her death occurred shortly afterwards, almost before the surprise at her retirement was over. She, like her famous predecessor, Mrs. Bracegirdle, was buried in the Cloisters of Westminster Abbey.

Garrick's comment when he heard the news of her death was: "Then tragedy expired with her." She was a tragedy queen of the old school, the "classic" school, to which Quin and Colley Cibber also belonged. The influence of the teaching of the latter, in the first instance, never left her as far as the speaking of her lines was concerned. She employed a plaintive high-pitched monotone—a method in striking contrast to that of Mrs. Pritchard and Garrick, who both belonged to the "natural" school of acting. Richard Cumberland, then a mere youth, saw her as *Calista* in Rowe's "*Fair Penitent.*" "Mrs. Cibber," he wrote afterwards, "in a key, high-pitched but sweet withal, sang, or rather recitatived, Rowe's harmonious strain, something in the manner of the improvisatores; it was so extremely wanting in contrast, that though it did not wound the ear, it wearied it; when she had once recited two or three speeches, I could anticipate the manner of each succeeding one. It was like a long old

legendary ballad of innumerable stanzas, every one of which is sung to the same tune, eternally chiming on the ear without variation or relief." The public had long been accustomed to these balanced cadences; Garrick's influence in the opposite direction took many years to make itself felt.

In spite of her monotonous delivery, however, Mrs. Cibber's effects seem to have been stupendous. The long list of tragedy parts with which she is identified testify to the height to which her genius attained, for she was universally eulogized in all. In comedy she was not successful, and although she seems to have held a high opinion of her own powers in this branch of her art, it was certainly not shared by the public. In the speaking of epilogues, however, she was much appreciated.

Many of her chroniclers speak of her as having been beautiful, but her beauty was of the mind and not of actual feature. Her soul shone through the superficial plainness of her face and lent to it a dignity and radiance that dazzled the beholder, and gave the impression of a beauty beyond that of mere physical perfection.

Her character commanded respect, even though her private life was perhaps not beyond censure. But of Mrs. Cibber can be said what can certainly not be said of some of her erring sisters, that her heart craved only one home. Having found through misery an object upon which to bestow her loyal adoration, even though to find it she had to break her marriage vows, she never again allowed her affections to wander. She was certainly much esteemed by persons of eminence, both in her own profession and outside it. Her house in Scotland Yard was frequented by poets and musicians

of the first rank. She was a perfect judge of music, and her conversation, if not brilliant, was agreeable and natural. Admired by the opposite sex, she was yet popular with her own, amongst whom she made few enemies—always excepting Peg Woffington, for whom she had an antipathy. She possessed considerable strength of character and a very firm will. Her persistency in the pursuit of her own ends was notorious. Once Mrs. Cibber had set her heart upon a thing, that thing she had got to have. No one knew this better than Garrick. "She was the greatest plague belonging to my house," he said; "I could easily parry the artless thrusts and despise the coarse language of some of my other heroines; but, whatever was Cibber's object, a new part or a new dress, she was always sure to carry her point by the acuteness of her invective and the steadiness of her perseverance."

Mrs. Cibber and Garrick remained on friendly terms to the last. His gaiety and brilliancy in society delighted her, and his visits to her at Mr. Sloper's house, Woodhays, were eagerly looked forward to. In a letter to her brother, written from there, she says: "Garrick has been here this three weeks, in great good humour and spirits, and, in short, we are all as merry as the day is long."

Garrick was in the habit of taking Woodhays on the way when he made his frequent visits to Bath. In a letter to him, dated November, 1765, she speaks of having "lost some happy laughing days by your Bath expedition not taking place." In another place in the same letter, after mentioning that their friend Dr. Barry had sent her a small account of Garrick's "theatrical stud and the ponies that run," she adds that she is determined "to enter my favourite mare,

Belvidera, six or seven days after I come to London. She is an old one, but I believe she will still beat the fillies, as she is sound in wind and limb, has never yet flung her rider, and will take care not to come in on the wrong side of the field."

Within two months of the writing of this letter, poor Belvidera's vivacity was hushed in the stillness of death.

CHAPTER III

THE RIVAL JULIETS—*continued*

GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY

GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY was the daughter of Lord Tyrawley, an impoverished Irish peer. Her name was evolved from a sequence of curious circumstances. To begin with, "George Anne" was a mistake made in the entry in the register for "Georgiana," which was the name in which she was supposed to have been baptized. As to her surname of Bellamy—that is another story. Her mother was a Miss Seal, who ran away from school with Lord Tyrawley. She lived with him for some time at his rooms in Somerset House, and here a son was born to them.

Shortly afterwards, Lord Tyrawley, finding himself short of money, contracted a marriage with Lady Mary Stewart, a reputed heiress, only to discover that she was without any resources of her own; whereupon he promptly packed her off and sent her back to her people.

Miss Seal, meanwhile, had gone on the stage, where she proved herself a very indifferent performer. Lord Tyrawley had by this time been sent to the embassy at Lisbon and kept urging her to join him. For a while she remained obdurate, till at last, heartily sick of a career for which she was totally unfitted, she suddenly gave way and started for Lisbon, where her lover

placed her in the family of an English merchant. What his object was for thus sending for her it is difficult to say since his love affairs had by now become further complicated by his attachment to a Portuguese lady, Donna Anna.

The next to arrive on the scene was Captain Bellamy, who fell violently and genuinely in love with Miss Seal, and eventually made her an offer of marriage. Her persistent refusal led him to cast about for a reason and to suspect the presence of a rival. The frequency of Lord Tyrawley's visits to the house soon afforded a clue, and in a fit of jealous rage the gallant captain enlightened the object of his affections as to his lordship's liaison with Donna Anna. This second betrayal was too much for Miss Seal, who, without more ado, married the Captain and secretly left Lisbon with him for Ireland. A few months later, to the amazement and horror of her devoted husband, she brought our heroine into the world. This unexpected event appears to have killed his love for his wife once and for all, and he forthwith took himself off, never to return. Little did he dream that his name was in future years to adorn the stage in the person of George Anne Bellamy.

It was at Fingal, on St. George's Day, 1731, that George Anne first opened her blue eyes upon a world to whose snares and temptations heredity had already predestined her to succumb. Lord Tyrawley hastened to acknowledge her as his daughter, and taking her from the mother he now hated, at a very early age sent her, when four years old, to a convent at Boulogne. Here she remained till her eleventh year, when her father returning to England from Portugal summoned her to London. The Donna Anna who was responsible for Miss Seal's abrupt marriage to Captain Bellamy

had accompanied his lordship, and George Anne was installed, together with the rest of his heterogeneous family—"three girls all of different mothers"—at Bushey Park, where he had taken a small residence.

Tyrawley's affection for George Anne was considerable, and Donna Anna bestowed upon the girl a good deal of jealous spite. This annoyance, however, was before long removed, for Donna Anna, presuming too greatly, assumed the title of Lady Tyrawley at some party of pleasure to which she and the three aforesaid young ladies had been invited in Lord Tyrawley's absence, and upon his discovering this liberty the whole crowd of them were bundled out neck and crop, and George Anne remained in sole possession of her father's home and affection.

In Lord Tyrawley's circle, as might have been expected from one of his amatory achievements, were to be found a number of distinguished men whose wit was decidedly more conspicuous than their morals. Thus it may safely be assumed that from a very early age George Anne received what might be called a liberal education. However, before very long Lord Tyrawley was appointed ambassador to Russia, and this period came to an end. George was placed by her father with a lady who had offered to take care of her during his absence, and with many prohibitions as to her holding any communication with her mother, he bade his adieux and departed.

The wretched Mrs. Bellamy was to prove a terrible stumbling-block to her daughter George Anne. Having married a dissipated boy in a fit of ungovernable passion, it was not long before she found herself on the wrong side of the fence. The amiable young man soon sickened of the woman who was old enough to

be his mother, and left her to join his regiment at Gibraltar, taking care to strip his spouse of all her jewels and possessions before he went. In her poverty and loneliness the deserted wife turned her thoughts towards George Anne, and, it may be, cast covetous eyes in the direction of the small allowance provided by the fond father for current expenses. An impassioned appeal to come to her was sent to the daughter, and George Anne, acting on the fatal impulsiveness which was her worst enemy throughout her life, packed up her trinkets and belongings, and without so much as bidding her protectress farewell hastened to place herself under her mother's poverty-stricken roof. The small sum she had brought with her was soon spent, the trinkets pawned, and then followed the disagreeable revelation that no more supplies were to be expected from the same source, for Lord Tyrawley, furious at his daughter's disobedience, refused to have anything more to do with her. Under these circumstances mother and daughter would have been in desperate straits had it not been for a certain Mrs. Jackson, who invited them to spend the summer with her at her house in Twickenham.

This visit was primarily responsible for George Anne's choice of a career, for whilst she and her mother were out walking one day they came across the celebrated Mrs. Woffington, who had been acquainted with George Anne's mother in Dublin. With characteristic kindheartedness the actress invited them both to stay with her at Teddington—an invitation that was eagerly accepted. It was during this visit that the performance of "*The Distressed Mother*" was given in a barn, in order to test the abilities of Peg Woffington's sister Polly. To George Anne was allotted the

part of *Andromache*, in which she acquitted herself so well that a great future was predicted for her should she ever decide to go upon the stage.

Peg Woffington's kindness was ill-requited in later days when Bellamy's sharp tongue frequently added to the discomfort the older actress encountered among her contemporaries in the green-room. A fierce jealousy existed between the two. Bellamy's extravagance in dress was a constant pin-prick to the other actresses, who not unnaturally gave her numerous admirers the credit of providing them. Peg Woffington seems to have been particularly envious of the young beauty's gorgeous attire. On one occasion, when Woffington was playing *Roxana* in "*The Rival Queens*" and Bellamy *Statira*, the former was in such a fury that she very nearly stabbed her rival in deadly earnest instead of in make-believe. Once off the stage the maddened *Roxana* turned and stabbed the provoking *Statira* with her tongue, accusing her of having her jewels and dresses provided by Henry Fox. "And you," retorted Bellamy, "have half the town who do not."

At the close of this visit—to resume the thread of our heroine's history—George Anne and her mother moved with Mrs. Jackson to Henrietta Street, Covent Garden, where they struck up an acquaintance with the daughters of John Rich. The young ladies soon became very intimate, and George Anne spent a great deal of her time in this congenial companionship. One day it was proposed that they should get up a performance of "*Othello*" among themselves, and the idea catching on, they set to work to study the parts. George Anne was given the part of *Othello*. During rehearsal one morning John Rich chanced to pass the open door of the room they occupied, and paused to

listen. George Anne happened at that moment to be delivering a speech of *Othello*, and Rich was so struck with her delivery and the melodious sweetness of her voice that he promptly entered the room and told her that if only she would study for the stage he would be most happy to engage her.

Rich was as good as his word. Not very long afterwards he offered her the part of *Monimia* in "*The Orphan*," and an agreement was signed between them. At this time George Anne was only fourteen years of age. It is not surprising, therefore, that Quin at first flatly refused to play *Chamont* to such a youthful *Monimia*. His example was followed by the remainder of the company, and it was only after the actors had been very heavily mulcted in fines that they could be induced to attend rehearsals. The performance was announced for the 22nd of November, 1744. George Anne's name did not appear upon the bills, but it was pretty well known who the *Monimia* was to be, and a brilliant audience, wild with curiosity, assembled at Covent Garden.

When the newly discovered actress, mere child as she was, stepped before the glare of the footlights, stage fright descended upon her and held her in its paralysing grip. Dazzled by the lights, stunned by the sight of the vast audience, George Anne stood like a lifeless statue, unable to utter a word. Pity for her youth and evident terror induced the audience to give a round of applause by way of encouragement, but in vain, and after a few agonized moments the curtain was brought down upon her misery. Quin was exultant, Rich well-nigh frantic. With prayers, entreaties, coaxings, even threats, he at last induced the débutante to make another attempt. This time she

GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY.

(From an engraving by Bartolozzi.)

succeeded in getting through her lines, but in so low a tone of voice that little was heard by the audience, who, however, continued to applaud with vigour. It was not until the fourth act that George Anne was able to recover from her malady and show the patient audience the extent of her powers. All at once she became inspired, her nervousness left her as suddenly as it had come, and she acted with such spirit and showed such remarkable promise that the audience applauded vigorously, this time from real approbation and delight. Rich was beside himself with exultation. Quin was so ravished by her performance that when she came behind the scenes at the conclusion of the act he lifted her bodily off her feet and exclaimed aloud, "Thou art a divine creature and the true spirit is in thee."

Quin, who was then nearly sixty years of age, became from that moment a real friend to the young actress, and it would have been well for her had she followed the excellent advice he so often bestowed upon her. One day, after a rehearsal of "*The Maid's Tragedy*," in which George Anne took the part of *Aspasia*, Quin sent for her to his dressing-room. Thinking that she must have offended the distinguished actor, she obeyed the invitation with a good deal of trepidation. As soon as she entered, however, she saw that her fears were groundless. Smiling at her benignly, Quin, usually so caustic of tongue, addressed her with the most fatherly solicitude. "My dear girl," he said, "you are vastly followed, I hear. Do not let the love of finery, or any other inducement, prevail upon you to commit an indiscretion. Men in general are rascals. You are young and engaging, and therefore ought to be doubly cautious. If you want any-

thing in my power which money can purchase, come to me and say—'James Quin, give me such a thing!' —and my purse shall be always at your service."

For the rest of that season George Anne played at Covent Garden. Rich, unable to afford her a salary commensurate with the success she met with or the importance of the parts she played, gave her a benefit free of all expenses on his own benefit night. This benefit exceeded her most sanguine hopes. By this time she had many admirers, who crowded to the theatre, and were on this occasion enabled to give tangible proof of the extent of their admiration. George Anne, in fact, found herself very considerably in pocket —a state of affairs that was eminently satisfactory to herself, and no doubt even more so to her mother, with whom she still lived. That lady had now taken to religion, and was so engrossed with her devotions that she had little time to spare for the daughter who was proving such a paying partner in the affairs of life. When, therefore, the fatal fairness of George Anne so inflamed the heart of Lord Byron, grand-uncle of the poet, that he actually eloped with her by strategy, and carried her off to his rooms in North Audley Street, the mother turned her back upon her erring daughter and refused to listen to her protestations of innocence.

A prolonged illness was the result of this unhappy contretemps. On her recovery George Anne accepted with alacrity the invitation of some Quaker relations to pay them a visit at Braintree, in Essex. The visit was, however, brought to a sudden conclusion owing to the discovery by these simple Quakers of her identity with "the celebrated actress, Miss Bellamy," a discovery that filled them with consternation and something almost akin to horror.

Reconciliation with her mother followed, and shortly afterwards the two set out for Ireland in response to a pressing invitation to George Anne from Sheridan, then manager of Aungier Street Theatre, in Dublin. Arrived in Dublin, George Anne called upon Mrs. O'Hara, Lord Tyrawley's sister. This lady was an invalid, and, moreover, blind, and not being able to do anything socially for her niece she handed her over to the Hon. Mrs. Butler (sister-in-law to Lord Lanesborough). Mrs. Butler was a person of great social importance. She took a fancy to George Anne, and willingly extended her patronage to her, inviting her constantly to her house and introducing her to all her friends. From 1745 to 1747 George Anne Bellamy reigned as a veritable queen. She was extraordinarily fair, and the eyes that gained for her the appellation "blue-eyed Bellamy" sparkled with vivacity and humour. She was pert, but she was charming—she was extravagant and capricious—but her high spirits and very real talent carried the day.

Dublin was frankly delighted with her. As *Monimia* first, and *Desdemona* afterwards, she created a veritable sensation. When "*King John*" was proposed, Sheridan and Garrick to play the *King* on alternate nights, George Anne was anxious to play the part of *Constance*. Garrick, however, strongly objected on the score of her youth, and wished the part to be played by Mrs. Furnival, an actress of matured experience. Bellamy, in a great state of excitement, solicited the protection and assistance of Mrs. Butler, who promptly responded by sending round to all her smart friends and forbidding them to patronize the performance of "*King John*." The invitations to her parties being greatly sought after, all her friends were anxious not to offend

her, and so it fell out that Garrick played to a house that did not contain £40. This direful experience resulted in a pressing invitation to George Anne to play the part of *Constance*. Mrs. Butler's embargo being removed in consequence, the house was packed to its utmost capacity, and the exulting actress had a magnificent reception.

A little later Garrick took his benefit. "*Jane Shore*" was the piece he chose for the occasion; he begged George Anne to take the part. Still smarting from what she considered the slight he had offered her over the part of *Constance*, she sent him word that if she was too young to play *Constance* she was too young to play *Jane Shore*, whereupon Garrick, in dismay, sent her a letter in which he told her that if she would play the part he would write her a goody-goody epilogue, which, with the help of her eyes, would do more mischief than ever the flesh and the devil had done since the world began. This effusion he directed, "To my Soul's Idol, the beautiful Ophelia." His servant, to whom it was entrusted for delivery, carelessly handed it to the porter without looking at the address, and the latter, probably suspecting a joke, delivered it to George Faulkner, the proprietor of a daily paper. We can imagine that gentleman smacking his lips over such a delectable piece of "copy." He promptly published it in his paper, much to Garrick's embarrassment and the delighted mirth of the town.

In 1748 Bellamy was re-engaged at Covent Garden, and entered upon the most brilliant period of her life. She was now in the front rank of actresses, and was able in some parts to hold her own even with her great rival, Mrs. Cibber. Some went so far as to say that

she excelled the latter, especially in the representation of rapturous love. But she lacked Mrs. Cibber's capacity for hard work, and was never at any period of her career as finished or as reliable an actress.

Lord Tyrawley arrived from abroad in the hey-day of his daughter's success. He speedily became reconciled to her and would have been quite satisfied with her had she been willing to marry his friend, Mr. Crump, for whom, however, the wilful George Anne had a positive aversion. Her love affairs were many and would fill a chapter by themselves. She was inconstant, impulsive and vain, and little can be said in excuse for the various illicit connections she formed from time to time—connections which invariably ended in disaster. The first recorded example of these—if we except the elopement with Lord Byron, an affair in which she always maintained her complete innocence—was with a Mr. Metham, afterwards Sir George Metham. This gentleman was deeply in love with her and declared that he would have married her had he not been dependent on his father, whose consent to the match was not to be thought of. George Anne accepted his attentions in spite of her declaration that nothing but marriage would satisfy her; and eventually Metham abducted her as she came behind the scenes between the acts of "*The Provoked Wife*," in which she was taking the part of *Lady Fanciful*. Mr. Quin, in the character of *John Brute*, was obliged to come before the curtain and inform the audience that it was useless to expect to see *Lady Fanciful* again that night as she had left with her admirer, "that was made on purpose for her." Indeed, George Anne seems to have been a very willing victim in this second abduction. She lived with Metham for some time in London

at a furnished house in Leicester Street, Leicester Fields, and then moved with him to York, where Metham had taken a house. This house adjoined a monastery, where the astonishing George Anne soon contracted an intimacy with the chaplain and the nuns, whose scruples as to her respectability she seems to have laid at rest by explaining that Metham was shortly going to marry her. She remained at York for several months and here her son was born. One anecdote that she tells of this time, in her amazing book, the "Apology" for her life, is amusing, as illustrating her vanity and self-consciousness, traits which it is only fair to add she seems to have been quite aware that she possessed.

Amongst the many male visitors who appeared at this irregular establishment from time to time was a certain nobleman, who, on the night of his arrival, was given the place of honour at Bellamy's right hand during dinner. George Anne very soon noticed that her guest's eye was constantly and steadily fixed upon her. Flattered at the thought of how soon her charms had captivated him, she, nevertheless, grew a little uncomfortable, thinking that others would notice his prolonged stare and condemn him for his lack of manners, We can imagine her "disconcerted and abashed," as she describes it, but not a little flattered into the bargain. Afterwards she complained to Metham of the "rudeness" to which she had been subjected. Metham was highly amused, and explained that his friend had not glared at her with any desire to offend, for the eye which had so alarmed her was only a *glass* eye and therefore could not convey any improper information, as it was immovable all day, and rested at night very quietly upon the table! It says a good deal for George

Anne's sense of humour that she was able to tell this story against herself.

The connection with Metham lasted for a good long time, during which both George Anne and her mother united in imploring him to seal it with the bond of marriage. Metham, however, seems to have preferred his liberty, and the wild extravagance upon which his mistress embarked no doubt helped to strengthen this preference. Eventually they had a violent quarrel which produced a permanent rupture, and although Metham later repented and actually implored George Anne over and over again to marry him, she would have nothing more to do with him. This was one of the most foolish things that this very foolish woman ever did. She seems to have been as fond of Metham as it was possible for any one with her fickle disposition to be, and her later connections, first with Calcraft, whom she very soon loathed, and later with Digges the actor, with whom she went through a ceremony of marriage only to find at a later period that he already had a wife living, were productive of nothing but unhappiness. Indeed, the extraordinary career of this amazing woman was the subject of talk and scandal for something like thirty years, the interest of her private love affairs, pecuniary difficulties, extravagance, and sufferings almost eclipsing her celebrity as an actress.

Her powers in her profession began to show signs of decay at a comparatively early age. In 1760 she once more visited Ireland, and was announced to play *Belvidera* in "*Venice Preserved*" at the Smock Alley Theatre, in opposition to Mrs. Abington at Crow Street. So anxious was Mossop to counteract the attraction at the other house, that he offered Bellamy a thousand pounds for the season and two benefits.

This offer she was only too glad to accept, being afraid to remain in London for fear of being arrested for debt.

Dublin was full of curiosity to see Bellamy again, and being anxious to give Mossop a sporting chance to hold his own against his rivals, provided a very large and representative audience. But poor Bellamy, though accorded a hearty welcome, suffered a bitter disillusionment. To quote Hitchcock: "Many years had elapsed since she left Ireland. Time is seldom an improvement of a lady's charms. The roses and lilies in her countenance had fled and left a decay too evident. The sweet tones of her voice had altered to a harshness which, not being expected, produced the most unpleasing sensations." The evening was a dead failure, and Bellamy never again drew a good house in Dublin. At the end of the season Mossop dispensed with her services, and to make matters worse was unable to pay the salary due to her. She was obliged to borrow £400 before leaving Dublin, to pay her debts.

From this time onwards Bellamy's history is one dreary catalogue of financial distresses. She was arrested for debt, and was for a short while deprived of her liberty. Her friends eventually came to her rescue, as they frequently did afterwards. Nothing, however, could save her from the effects of her own extravagance. Poverty and misery dogged her footsteps to the end, until we actually see her at last sitting upon the steps of old Westminster Bridge watching the tide rise higher and higher, and waiting for it to engulf her once radiant and all-conquering person. That she was saved from suicide was due, she informs us, to the approach of a poor woman who was in worse case than herself, but whom she overheard exclaim to the child

by her side, "My God! My God! What wretchedness can compare to mine! But Thy Almighty Will be done!" This pious exclamation is supposed to have aroused George Anne to a realization of the wickedness she had been contemplating, although the cynical might hold a suspicion that this queen among casuists was only too glad to grasp an excuse to avoid carrying out her proposed extinction.

On the 24th of May, 1785, her much-tried friends induced the managers to give her a farewell benefit, and Mrs. Yates played for her the *Duchess of Braganza*. Although only about fifty years of age, want and misery had brought her so low that she had not the courage to go before the curtain and utter a few words of farewell. These were spoken for her by Miss Farren; and when the curtain rose the audience beheld the once beautiful, radiant, triumphant George Anne Bellamy—shrunken and old, and without the spirit even to rise to her feet, reclining in an arm-chair. Miss Catley bent over her, urging her to speak. She murmured a few words and fell back again, the curtain was promptly rung down upon the miserable spectacle and the final exit of George Anne Bellamy from public life was accomplished.

CHAPTER IV

PEG WOFFINGTON

"IF I were among you, I would kiss as many of you as had beards that pleased me——"

A husky voice falters out these words, hesitates for a few seconds, then gathering itself together for one more effort bravely struggles on—"Complexions that liked me——"

Again the voice pauses ; a note of terror has crept into it—"And breaths that I—Oh, God!—Oh, God!——"

A piercing shriek echoes from end to end of the theatre. People rise hurriedly from their seats and stare at the stage. There is an awful moment of horrified suspense, and then the owner of the voice claps her hands to her side, totters across the stage to the wings and falls into the arms stretched out to receive her.

Margaret Woffington has spoken her last Epilogue. Stricken by paralysis whilst yet in the prime of life, she, with eyes dimmed by pangs of mental and bodily suffering, watches the fall of the curtain for the last time.

The above unrehearsed scene was witnessed by a brilliant audience assembled in the auditorium of Covent Garden Theatre, on the 17th of May, 1757. The play presented was "*As You Like It*," and the occasion, the "benefit" of two minor actors and a

French dancer, on whose behalf the celebrated actress was giving her highly popular performance of "*Rosalind.*"

Throughout the evening those behind the scenes had realized that "Peg" was very far from well. She had, however, managed to struggle through without a breakdown until the Epilogue was reached, at which point, Death, who was nevertheless not to make his final reaping until three years later, first put his sickle to the standing corn.

Margaret Woffington "has been made the heroine of a romance that is more than half a memoir: she has been made the heroine of a memoir that is more than half a romance." Her biographers seem to have found it impossible to write about her from a purely impersonal or professional point of view. This may partly be accounted for by the fact that she was little more than forty years of age when she died, and her bewitching spell was still woven about the hearts of the men to whose memoirs we have to turn for information. Arthur Murphy, Tom Davies, Hitchcock, Tate Wilkinson and many others who chronicled her doings and described her fascinations were personally acquainted with her, and some of them were counted among her friends. It is curious, however, to find her more modern biographers, strive as they may to the contrary, slipping away from facts and wandering off into the regions of Romance. There must have been something almost supernatural about the magnetism of this long-dead Irishwoman, who can thus, from the very confines of the grave, send forth the shade of her blarney to lay caressing fingers upon those who try to see her as she was.

The name of Sarah Siddons conjures up at once

visions of the tragic stage. We remember in a flash all that we have ever read of her great rôles—her *Belvidera*, her *Desdemona*, her *Ophelia*, and above and beyond all, her *Lady Macbeth*. But the name of Margaret Woffington thrills us in a totally different way.

The memory of her *Lady Betty Modish*, her *Millamant*, her *Lady Townly*, even her unrivalled *Sir Harry Wildair*—fades away into the background, made hazy by the soft grey mist, formed of romantic legends and traditions, that has been wrapped about the figure of the actual *woman*—the saucy-tongued gadfly of the green-room, the gay charmer whose victims could be counted by the score, the impulsive, the pleasure-seeking, the frail, the warm-hearted flesh-and-blood woman, Peg Woffington.

Yet she was one of the greatest actresses of her time. In comedy she had no rival, and in tragedy she held her own, although in this branch of her art she was excelled by her contemporaries Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard. In "breeches" parts, a line she made peculiarly her own, she reigned supreme. In London, as well as in her native Dublin, her name was one to conjure with; her managers never failed to fill their coffers to overflowing whenever they placed the name of Peg Woffington upon their bills. Davies says: "Her chief merit in acting consisted in the representation of females in high rank and of dignified elegance, whose graces in deportment, as well as foibles, she understood and displayed in a very lively manner. The fashionable irregularities and sprightly coquetry of a *Millamant*, a *Lady Townly*, *Lady Betty Modish* and *Maria* in "*The Non-juror*," were exhibited by Woffington with such happy ease and gaiety, and

with such powerful attraction, that the excesses of these characters appeared not only pardonable but agreeable."

That she should have been so successful in rôles of "high rank" is remarkable when the circumstances of her childhood are taken into consideration. Born in a Dublin slum about 1720—some put it a little earlier, some later—Peg had a bricklayer for a father and a washerwoman for a mother. When the father died, the washerwoman took a little huckster's shop on Ormond Quay. She used to sell oranges in the streets of Dublin, in the plying of which trade she had the assistance of her elder daughter, Peg, a child about eight years old; the younger daughter, Polly, being still an infant in arms. Peg was a prime favourite with the students of College Green. Sometimes she was sent round with a basket of watercress, crying "Fine salads for a ha'penny," and then the young men would run after her and buy up the whole of her stock-in-trade, and perhaps pat her kindly on the head and laugh at her childish sallies.

Peg's career would probably have ended in the same humble obscurity in which it had begun, but for the fact that a certain Madame Violante, by profession a tumbler and rope-dancer, happened to come across the attractive child drawing water from the Liffey. Her graceful carriage and easy walk, with the bowl of water balanced on her shapely head, drew the Frenchwoman's attention, and we are told that she followed the child to her home, and there and then came to terms with the mother, it being arranged that Peggy should become a member of her troupe and be taught to dance and sing with a view to taking to the stage as a profession.

Madame Violante had erected a booth in a large yard at the back of Fownes Court, a mansion she had hired near College Green. The popular tradition that Peg was one of the two children suspended in baskets from the Violante's feet when she walked upon the tight-rope will not bear very close inspection, for although the exact date of Peg's birth is somewhat uncertain, it is established beyond doubt that she must at this period have been a great deal too old for such a feat to have been possible.

To this Frenchwoman Peg was indebted for much of the success of after days. Even at this early age the child was extraordinarily ambitious. She took the utmost pains with everything she was told to do, and Madame Violante, perceiving this and recognizing the promise shown, spared herself no trouble in the training of her enthusiastic little recruit. The result exceeded expectation. Peg, who imitated her teacher's manners and deportment, and never lost an opportunity of improving herself, proved a veritable "find."

When the town tired of the tumblers, the swordsmen and the rope-dancers of Violante's troupe, that enterprising lady seized upon the idea of presenting Gay's "*Beggar's Opera*," with a cast composed entirely of children. The success of this venture was instantaneous. Peg Woffington took the part of *Polly*, and so brilliant was the little thing's performance in this Lilliputian entertainment that she attracted the attention of Charles Coffey, whose plays, "*The Beggar's Wedding*" and "*The Devil to Pay*," were just then having a great vogue in London. Coffey persuaded Madame Violante to produce the latter, and Peg was given the part of *Nell*, already made famous in London by Kitty Clive, then Miss Raftor. Coffey had closely studied the methods

of the vivacious whimsical Drury Lane actress and her interpretation of the part, and he now took the greatest pains to pass on the fruit of his observations to the clever child-actress Peg. The result was that her performance of the part made quite a sensation, and there could no longer be any doubt that the rope-dancer, when she stumbled upon the little water-carrier on the banks of the Liffey, had come across a jewel of the very first water.

These early facts of Peg's career are important in the light of subsequent events. From the Frenchwoman she learned her easy manners and the way to make the most of the natural grace with which she was endowed. From her she acquired a very passable familiarity with the French language. In later days great ladies in Society were not too proud to try and copy her wonderful walk, the carriage of her well-shaped figure, the studied elegance of her finery. She never obtained the entrée to the most exclusive circles of the aristocracy, as her famous predecessor Nance Oldfield had done, but the Society beauties of the day were only too eager to try to penetrate the secret of her success with the other sex, not realizing, perhaps, that Peg Woffington, off-spring of the slums though she were, was possessed of the one inimitable God-sent gift—the quality of charm —that cannot be acquired be it sought never so carefully with tears.

When about seventeen years of age Peg had her first speaking part. The actress who was to take the part of *Ophelia* at the Aungier Street Theatre was taken seriously ill, and Peg, who had been engaged by Elrington to sing and dance between the acts, begged to be allowed to take her place. At first he laughed at the bare idea. He quite recognized that the beautiful

girl had talent, but not only did he consider her too young, he was extremely prejudiced against her voice, which was harsh despite all her efforts to conquer the defect. Her pronounced brogue was also a stumbling-block in the opinion of Elrington, a point upon which he eventually proved to be in error, for it turned out to be one of the most potent of her wiles in the time to come.

However, in spite of all obstacles, Peggy at last had her way. She was bursting with ambition. Singing and dancing between the acts was all very well, but deep down in her heart of hearts she knew that she was destined to achieve something a great deal higher than that. She left Elrington no peace until he had given way, and as a matter of fact he was at his wits' end to find a substitute for the sick *Ophelia* of his company. The part for some reason or other had not been under-studied, and, after all, Peg seemed to be the only possible solution of his difficulty.

The town went wild with excitement when it heard that the little water-cress seller of former days was going to play *Ophelia*. By this time she was intensely popular with her impulsive warm-hearted country men and women. The rapid rise of the talented slum-child had fired their imagination ; they were ready to applaud and encourage, whatever the issue might be. When the night came the house was packed from pit to gallery. The audience soon grasped the fact that it was witnessing a great triumph for their favourite and its delight showed itself in prolonged bursts of applause. On the fall of the curtain at the end of the "mad" scene, the public were in possession of the knowledge that there had grown up among them one who was destined to climb to the highest pinnacles of fame. It

is true, as Molloy informs us, that "she began her career by mistaking its course, for it was comedy and not tragedy for which she was fitted," but her performance of *Ophelia* was so unmistakably full of promise that it was regarded as a sure forerunner of what she was ultimately to achieve.

Elrington at any rate gave practical demonstration of his appreciation by allotting her a regular place in his company at a salary of thirty shillings a week, a meagre sum enough, but one that seemed passing rich to the former "star" of Violante's booth. Peg acquitted herself so well in the "old women's" parts entrusted to her that she was eventually given all the principal rôles in Elrington's productions.

So far, the actress—by this time fairly launched on a career which was destined to make dramatic history. And now—what of the woman?

"It was now," says Hitchcock, "that she first began to unveil those beauties and display those graces and accomplishments which for so many years afterwards charmed mankind." In Ireland she was considered the most beautiful of her race, no small compliment in that land of lovely women. In spite of her lowly birth, Peg had an inborn distinction all her own. Original and daring though she was in her dress, her faultless taste prevented her from committing errors in this respect. Her elegance was the despair and envy of the fine ladies of Dublin. She had the small, well-shaped head that had so vividly arrested Madame Violante's attention on first seeing her. Her eyes were "large and black as jet, with long eyelashes and exquisitely pencilled brows," those same expressive brows that Charles Reade raves about when he describes her in his novel. This feature indeed is dwelt upon by many

of the old writers, and evidently contributed greatly to her charm. She wore her hair unpowdered, and most of her portraits show her wearing a lace cap or a flat garden hat, eminently becoming to her style of beauty. Yet with all her physical graces, Peg Woffington throughout her life remained the least vain among women. Her unconsciousness of her good looks was of great advantage to her in her profession, for her cheerful readiness to take parts like *Mrs. Peachum* and *Mother Midnight*, entailing as they did considerable disfigurement, really widened her range and added enormously to her experience. Not only was Peg a beautiful woman, she was a true artist. There are many instances given of her consenting to undertake to play quite minor characters if by so doing she could advance the interests of a play. Her good-nature was proverbial. Over and over again she stepped into the breach when the other actors and actresses feigned illness, which they seemed to have done very frequently, and allowed herself to be presented, often at the last moment, in one of her famous parts.

Her voice remained somewhat harsh to the end. She called it "my bad voice," probably on account of an incident that is related of her when she was playing *Portia*. *Lorenzo* says, "That is the voice, or I am much deceived, of *Portia*." To which *Portia* replies, "He knows me, as the blind man knows the cuckoo, by the bad voice." When Woffington pronounced these words the audience broke out into a roar of merriment, in which Peg, who could always enjoy a laugh against herself, joined. Nevertheless she must have been a little sensitive about this defect, for almost the only unkindness ever recorded of her was when she attempted to induce Rich not to enter into an engage-

ment with Tate Wilkinson because that young actor had once mimicked her voice.

By the time Peg Woffington left her native country for the first time, which took place three years after her triumphant appearance as *Ophelia*, we may be sure she had already been through a good many amorous experiences. It was about this time, however, that she fell seriously in love. The object of her affections was a young man named Taafe, the third son of an impoverished Irish peer. In his company she left Dublin and settled in lodgings in London. He had, certainly, promised to marry her, but no doubt the result would have been the same if he had not done so. Peggy was in love, and when Peggy was in that condition convention was scattered to the four winds of heaven. It may as well be confessed straight away that she was as frankly unmoral as she was fascinating. The morals of the stage at that period were loose—indeed, those of society in general were not much better—and it is not very astonishing that the beautiful Irish girl, whose ears must have been accustomed to many a coarse jest from earliest infancy, should have succumbed to the temptations her own alluring charms provoked. In Taafe she seems to have made an unfortunate selection. Not only was he unprincipled and profligate, but his affections were more than commonly shortlived. Before many weeks were past he was sick to death of his beautiful companion, and making urgent business affairs in Ireland an excuse, he incontinently left her, not, however, without vowing very shortly to return. Peg soon discovered that he had not gone back to Ireland, but was in London paying court to an heiress to whom he had become engaged and hoped soon to marry. The fury of the hot-blooded Irish girl upon

discovering this perfidy can easily be imagined. She swore to have her revenge. Molloy in his "memoir that is more than half a romance" gives us an elaborately embroidered account of how she kept her vow. Assuming the garb of a gallant and fashionable young beau, and the name of "Mr. Adair," she persistently dogged the footsteps of the heiress from one place of entertainment to another in search of an introduction. Wherever the heiress was to be found, there, hovering about in the background, was "Mr. Adair," throwing burning glances of adoration at the object of his passion. At last came the grand opportunity. At a "public ridotto" at Vauxhall Gardens the young gentleman succeeded in making her acquaintance, and after some pretty compliments had been exchanged he felt himself regretfully impelled to inform her of her fiancé's double existence. The heiress, quite unaware of her admirer's identity, and not a little impressed by his good looks and fascinating personality, was horrified at her lover's treachery and threw him over without more ado. This was the end of the Taafe episode, so far as Peg was concerned, as well, for that very night he came to her lodgings, and, finding that it was she who had caused his plans to "gang agley," vented his fury upon her in no measured terms. "Breaking from her arms," we are told, "where she was detaining him with the most soothing words and blandishing caresses, he swore never to see her more." She was well rid of him, for he eventually went to the bad altogether and covered himself with disgrace.

Undaunted by this contretemps, Peg now engaged herself to Rich, the manager at Covent Garden, and entered upon a brilliant period of successes. Her fame had crossed the Channel, and Rich, in order to add

lustre to this her first appearance in London, bespoke the favour of the attendance of the Prince of Wales and his Princess. This being granted, a brilliant house assembled to witness Peg Woffington's performance of *Sylvia* in George Farquhar's comedy "*The Recruiting Officer.*" Her success was electrical; the play had to be repeated three nights in succession—a great triumph in the days when a fresh play was expected every night.

It was, however, her representation of *Sir Harry Wildair* that carried her to the summit of her fame. Of this character in Farquhar's comedy "*The Constant Couple, or a Trip to the Jubilee,*" Peg had already made a brilliant success in Dublin. It was a part that Wilks, now dead about ten years, had made entirely his own, and was associated with traditions of his acting so vividly remembered by an appreciative public that no actor had ventured to play it since. Peg's friends indeed had felt misgivings when their favourite had decided to attempt what, in their opinion, was the impossible; but in London, as in Dublin, these apprehensions proved to be groundless. From the moment that Peg tripped upon the stage, as gay, as lively, as dashing, as elaborately a be-powdered and be-laced young spark as any one could wish to see, Wilks's performance was forgotten. The audience roared out its appreciation throughout the performance, and from that night Peg became the darling of the town. Prints of her were on sale everywhere. She was the inspiration of the rhymesters and wits of the day. Fashionable beaux, poets, writers, even smart ladies, crowded to the green-room to listen to the bright repartees of "Sir Harry" and bask in the sunshine of "his" smiles. Peg played the part twenty times

in her first season in London. One enraptured young lady, believing her to be really a man, is said to have made her an offer of marriage. Peg was intoxicated with her success. Having just left the stage one night amidst a deafening thunder of applause, she ran gaily into the green-room, and cried out to Quin, "I have played this part so often that half the town believe me to be a real man." Quin, whose saturnine humour frequently concealed his genuine kindness of heart, made reply, "Madam, the other half know you to be a woman." The merry-hearted actress enjoyed this joke hugely, and related it often to her friends. Sly digs at her well-known frailties never had the slightest effect in disturbing her equanimity. On another occasion, when Quin asked her why she had been to Bath, she answered, with a toss of her head, "Oh, for mere wantonness!" Quin retorted, "And have you been cured of it?" History does not relate what she said in reply to this sally, but we know that there could have been only one truthful one. Peggy's "cure" of that particular ailment was not consummated until the sands of Life had almost run themselves out.

It was about at this period that her connection with David Garrick began. So much has been written concerning this "friendship" that it will be unnecessary to dwell upon it at any great length in these pages. The young actor had, at the time of Peg's appearance in London, only just made his final decision to make the stage his profession. Both at Covent Garden and at Drury Lane—for Peggy soon moved thither owing to a quarrel with Rich—Garrick was often to be seen amongst the audience. He had fallen in love with her from the moment he saw her as *Sylvia*. "Here was

PEG WOFFINGTON.

an actress," says Molloy, "after his own heart; one who neither reduced comedy to burlesque, nor tragedy to rant, but who was at one with nature." Peggy was no doubt deeply impressed by the genius of the young new-comer who had just startled the town by his brilliant appearance as *Richard III*, and was quite ready to meet his advances half-way. A liaison was established which lasted about three years. For the time being Garrick's enslavement was complete, and Peggy heartily reciprocated his devotion. There is no doubt she expected eventually to become his wife, and that he on his part actually did contemplate this ending to their romance. Murphy declares that the actor, alternating between the counsels of prudence and the dictates of passion, had even gone so far on one occasion as to try the wedding ring on her finger, to see whether it fitted. David was desperately in love, but, after all, to have bound himself for ever to this volatile, extravagant creature who had bestowed her favours impartially upon a goodly number of the members of his own sex with whom he was acquainted, would have carried a very great risk, and one that he can hardly be blamed for not taking. So the affair, destined in later years to form a target for the envenomed tongues and pens of Garrick's detractors, who attributed his hesitation to parsimoniousness and snobbishness alone, remained a love idyll and no more.

On one occasion this brilliant couple having gone over to Ireland together for a season of unprecedented success at the Smock Alley Theatre, Garrick was standing in the wings watching Peg's triumphant performance of *Sir Harry Wildair*. When she came off the stage, flushed with excitement, the thunderous roar of the applause she had provoked still ringing in her

ears, Garrick exclaimed fondly, "Ah, Peggy, you are the queen of all hearts." "Aye," she replied sadly, "queen of all hearts, yet not legal mistress of one."

On their return to London, Peg Woffington and Garrick, together with Charles Macklin, set up a curious triangular establishment at 6 Bow Street. These three exponents of the "natural" school of acting were joined together in ties of warmest friendship as well as community of interests. With a view to improving theatrical taste, they founded a dramatic school, and for the furtherance of this project they determined to live together, play together, and share a common purse. For a time this venture proved a success, but eventually a deficit in the exchequer forced a dissolution of the partnership, and Garrick and "Mrs." Woffington, as by this time she was designated, removed themselves to Southampton Street, Strand, where they settled down to their housekeeping alone.

Their rooms soon became as popular as they were themselves. The host and hostess took it in turn to defray the monthly expenses. At this time Peg was earning £7 10s. a week, besides £50 for "cloaths" and a guaranteed benefit of £180. Garrick's salary and benefits amounted already to about £1000 for the season. There was, therefore, plenty of money to provide for the entertainment of the acquaintances who dropped in and out. It was a standing joke that when the open-handed Peg took her turn at paying the piper, there was a far more lavish display of good things than was the case when David's turn came round. The "stinginess" of which he was accused was doubtless exaggerated, but nevertheless it is a fact that he found it difficult to throw off the careful habits acquired in

the penurious home of his boyhood. There is a story of an occasion when the great Dr. Johnson was taking tea with the couple. It happened to be David's turn to open his purse-strings. The gracious Peg, who was making tea, was gaily shovelling choice "bohea" into the pot with her customary prodigality, regardless of the fact that the precious commodity at that time cost no less than thirteen shillings a pound. David bore the sight as long as he could, but at last seeing her hand go out with one more spoonful, he could contain himself no longer, and burst out into violent remonstrances.

"The tea is no stronger than I have made it before," remarked his beautiful partner good-humouredly.

"No stronger than before!" he shouted angrily. "All last month it would have hurt nobody's stomach. But this tea, madam, is as red as blood."

Many illustrious men frequented this irregular household. Peg was a capital hand at repartee. She had a fine understanding and a ready wit, and could hold her own with anybody in conversation. Arthur Murphy tells us that her wit was not "of that wild sort which breaks out in sudden flashes, often troublesome and impertinent. Her judgment restrained her within due bounds." She was very well-informed, having taken a great deal of trouble to educate herself from her earliest days. The names that figure upon the list of the company who gathered about her are sufficient proof that Peggy's attractions included those of mind as well as of body. First and foremost there was Samuel Johnson, at that time a writer in the "Gentleman's Magazine." Then there was Samuel Foote, brilliant satirist and mimic; Charles Macklin; Henry Fielding, then struggling for a reputation; Dr. John

Hoadley (son of the Bishop), a chaplain in the household of the Prince of Wales, and a play-writer; and, we may be sure, Colley Cibber, the old actor and playwright whose heart Peggy had long since conquered and who remained her fond admirer to the end. The actress did not care for the society of her own sex—she used to declare that women talked of nothing but "silks and satins"—but there was one female visitor on the list, and that was the veteran actress Mrs. Porter, who had played to Queen Anne, and now delighted in meeting the younger generation of players.

One of Peg's great admirers was Sir Charles Hanbury Williams, the friend of Lady Mary Wortley Montagu. He was a sad rake but a brilliant wit, and something of a poet. Of him Lady Mary once said that "he might be happy if he added to his natural and endowed acquirements a dash of morality." Fox was his friend, and so was Horace Walpole, who had his portrait framed in black and gold and hung it up in his rather terrible mansion at Strawberry Hill.

It is not surprising that Peg's intimacy with this dazzling habitué of aristocratic circles should have aroused the jealousy of Garrick. This was not a little augmented by the fact that the baronet's verses to "Lovely Peggy" became the talk of the town, and were quoted everywhere, whilst his own were passed by almost unnoticed. Recriminations followed, and although Peg assured her lover over and over again that Sir Charles was no more to her than an agreeable acquaintance, David's suspicions to the contrary became acute. Peg's notions of fidelity were elementary, and remained so in spite of her infatuation for Garrick, and in the end the chains that were beginning to gall the shoulders of at any rate one of the two people con-

cerned, were snapped. Garrick returned all her presents with the exception of a pair of diamond shoe-buckles, which he declared he kept because they "were all he had to recall his many happy hours with her." But there were many who were ready to hint that he kept them simply because he could not bear to part with articles of so much monetary value.

It is pleasant to turn from the contemplation of Peggy as mistress to Peggy as daughter and sister. In the latter capacity she, like the incomparable Lady Hamilton, was irreproachable. From the moment she became the possessor of a good salary she behaved with the utmost generosity to the old woman who had borne her. She provided her with an annuity of forty pounds a year. In addition, she kept her supplied with clothes, and we hear of a "velvet cloak, with deep fringe" being sent all the way from London to adorn the proud mother's person.

As sister, Peggy was no less to be commended. She sent Polly to a convent in France, where she was educated as any daughter of the aristocracy might have been. She was a pretty, vivacious creature, with more regular features than Peg, but without her charm. Soon after Peg's rupture with Garrick, that model elder sister took a house at Teddington (Udney Hall), so that the pretty girl, who had just left her convent, should be shielded from the contamination of theatrical influences. Her jealous regard for her sister's reputation was pathetic. The girl could have had no more staid and watchful duenna than this incorrigible offender against every law of propriety and convention. Polly, however, had no taste for a permanent exclusion from the world of gaiety, and wished ardently to go upon the stage, and after a short period

of resistance, Peg, whose one ambition was to indulge her every whim, reluctantly consented. She herself undertook her sister's instruction and final launching upon the London boards.

Polly's début was in a professional sense a failure, but from a social point of view it turned out to be the determining factor in the course her life was to follow. Amongst the audience was a nephew of Horace Walpole, the Hon. Captain Cholmondeley. So fascinated was he by Polly Woffington's captivating charms that he hastened to make her acquaintance, and eventually married her, to the chagrin of his aristocratic relations. Horace Walpole's annoyance at what he not unnaturally regarded as a *mésalliance* may have accounted for the fact that almost to the last he ranged himself among the small minority who denied to Peg the full recognition of her genius.

In 1751 Peg Woffington was at the zenith of her fame. She was then in Dublin under Tom Sheridan's management. The only member of the fair sex admitted to the Beef Steak Club, she was unanimously elected President, an office she fulfilled with boundless satisfaction to herself and to the little court of enthusiastic admirers by which she was surrounded. Yet, amidst all the adulation, she remained unspoilt. Hitchcock tells us: "Whilst thus in the zenith of her glory, courted and caressed by all ranks and degrees, it made no alteration in her behaviour. She remained the same gay, affable, obliging, good-natured Woffington to every one around her. She had none of those occasional illnesses which I have sometimes seen assumed by capital performers, to the great vexation and loss of the managers, and disappointment to the public. She always acted four times a week."

Her popularity during this her last season in her native city exceeded anything that had ever been known. "She was the only theme in or out of the theatre." She now launched out into an extravagance of living that must have caused amazement to any who remembered her first appearance in Madame Violante's booth. She kept a "coach," and rented a house in Capel Street, opposite to that occupied by the "beautiful Miss Gunnings." These young ladies, whose parents were perpetually on the brink of financial disaster, wished to be presented at Court, but not being able to afford dresses of sufficient grandeur for the occasion, they were eating their hearts out with longing and disappointment. In an inspired moment, however, they bethought them of the beautiful actress whom they constantly saw going in and out of the house opposite, and of whose kindness of heart they had heard so much. Eagerly they hastened to call upon her and explain to her the sadness of their plight. Of course, with characteristic generosity, Peg threw herself whole-heartedly into the affair, with the result that the two highly elated young beauties—one of whom was destined to become Duchess of Hamilton and the other the Countess of Coventry—appeared at Court in the borrowed finery of an actress.

The next season (1752) Sheridan, amazed at Woffington's popularity—for it was only owing to Victor's importunities that he had consented to engage her, being at the time entirely satisfied with his leading actress, Mrs. Bland—doubled her salary of £400, and secured her for another season as brilliant as the last. The following year she appeared once more at Covent Garden, and continued to delight the town for another four years.

Her troubles in the green-room would fill a chapter by themselves. Her meteoric career naturally excited the jealousy of her fellow-actresses. After her quarrel with Garrick, Drury Lane was made unbearable to her by the petty annoyances to which she was subjected. Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Pritchard lost no opportunity of administering pin-pricks to the proud and beautiful "star." There was little excuse for jealousy in their case, for Peg could not compete with them in tragedy, a field in which they reigned supreme. But they cordially disliked her, and took a fiendish delight in trying to humiliate her before the motley crowd of beaux, wits, and critics who were in those days allowed to invade the green-room. Peg, although harassed by these attacks, generally managed to turn the weapons in her adversaries' hands, and took care that they should draw blood from the veins of those that wielded them rather than from her own. Her tongue was as sharp as a rapier, and her wit infinitely more subtle than that of her opponents.

Kitty Clive was, however, a veritable thorn in Peg's flesh. To quote Davies: "No two women in high life ever hated each other more unreservedly than these two great dames of the theatre; but though the passion of each was as lofty as those of a duchess, yet they wanted the courtly art of concealing them. Woffington was well-bred, seemingly very calm, and at all times mistress of herself. Clive was arrogant, high-tempered, and impetuous. What came uppermost in her mind she spoke without reserve. Woffington blunted Clive's sharp speeches by her apparently civil but ever keen and sarcastic replies. Thus she often threw Kitty off her guard by an arch severity, which the other could not easily parry."

The unseemly bickerings between these two celebrated actresses afforded a never-failing topic of piquant conversation in the clubs and coffee-houses of the day. An account of their most notorious encounter which actually culminated in the exchange of fisticuffs all round was published in a pamphlet entitled "The Green-room Scuffle," and provided a titbit of scandal for many a long day.

Peg's readiness to take a small part when by so doing she could ensure the success of a play, has already been noted. In 1754, when she was at Covent Garden, "*Henry IV*" was given, and Peg in order to strengthen the cast condescended to play the small part of *Lady Percy*. The house was a thin one, and Kitty taunted her fair rival on the emptiness of the pit and boxes. Peg coolly parried the thrust by reminding Kitty of an occasion when she had played one of her principal parts to a more meagre audience still. These compliments exchanged, the couple settled down in deadly earnest to an altercation, which, becoming louder and more furious every moment, was destined finally to end in a flow of King's English worthy of the denizens of Billingsgate gutters. Worse than that, Peg, maddened beyond endurance, relieved the dammed-up current of her hot Irish blood by smacking her hated adversary in the face. A veritable pandemonium ensued. One of the gentlemen present, a certain old Mr. Swiney, a great admirer of Peg's (he afterwards left her a considerable fortune), becoming excited, rushed at Kitty's brother, Jim Raftor, and struck him a smart blow with his cane. Raftor responded by "calmly laying hold of the old man's jaw." The place echoed with the cries of the combatants. "Let go my jaw, you villain," shrieked

old Swiney. "Throw down your cane, sir," shouted the infuriated Raftor. And goodness knows how it would all have ended had not Barry, who was "afraid lest the audience should hear full as much of the quarrel as the play," burst in and put an end to the battle.

It was owing to all this unpleasantness, coupled with the fact that Garrick's marriage to Mlle. Violette occurred about this time, that Peg left Drury Lane in 1751, and went over to Ireland as we have seen.

Her last years were spent on the boards of Covent Garden in a round of fashionable comedies. Besides those famous impersonations already mentioned, she delighted the town with a long list of others. *Mrs. Sullen* in "*The Beaux' Stratagem*," *Angelina* in "*Love Makes a Man*," *Mrs. Ford* in "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*," *The Queen* in "*Hamlet*," *Helena* in "*The Rover*," *The Frenchified Lady* in "*Theodosius*," *Charlotte* in "*The Refusal.*" Of every one of these parts Mrs. Woffington made an unqualified success; her powers and her popularity remaining undimmed to the end.

We have seen at the beginning of this chapter how it fell out that she had not the opportunity of proving the sincerity of a vow she had made. "When," she had often declared, "I can no longer bound on the boards with elastic step, and when the enthusiasm of the public begins to show symptoms of change, that will be the last appearance of Margaret Woffington." There remains therefore but to record the fact that she lived on for three years after her seizure in retirement at her house at Teddington, with her dresser, Mrs. Barrington, widow of John Barrington, the actor, as companion; that about this time she seems to have

turned to religion for consolation; that this once insatiable seeker after pleasure spent her remaining days knitting garments for the poor, endowing almshouses, distributing bounty to the sick and needy, and, by warning the young against the temptations of the theatrical profession, doing her utmost to make her peace with the Keeper of her conscience.

She died on the 28th March, 1760, at her sister's house in Queen Square, Westminster, and was buried in the graveyard of the parish church of St. Mary, Teddington.

"Forgive her one female error," says Murphy, "and it might fairly be said of her that she was adorned with every virtue; honour, truth, benevolence, and charity were her distinguishing qualities."

In truth, it would be impossible to exaggerate this famous actress's unselfishness and goodness of heart. Her eagerness to perform for the "benefits" of her fellow actors and actresses was notorious. "Not the lowest performer in the theatre did she refuse playing for," says Hitchcock, at the close of one of her seasons. "Out of twenty-six benefits, she acted in twenty-four." There are innumerable instances recorded of her charity, and often they were exercised at the cost of considerable personal trouble. When an actor named Milward, who was in the same company with her, fell ill with a severe cold which eventually ended in consumption, she attended to him herself throughout the long lingering illness that followed, and when he died she organized a benefit for his widow and children.

Small wonder that Charles Reade, a hundred years later, felt impelled to write in his diary: "I am in love with Peg Woffington. She is dead and cannot sting me. I love her, and hope to make many love her."

Whether his hope was fulfilled can only be decided by those who read the romance in which he has so cunningly woven together history and invention that it is almost impossible to disentangle the two.

Triplet, the lugubrious scene-painter, artist, and would-be dramatist, we know to have been an invented character. We know that no such scene existed as is described with so much humour and pathos—no distracted father, with writing materials in front of him, racking his brains for a suitable masterpiece with which to conjure up bread for the mouths of his famished offspring—no little child sitting upon his knee and murmuring, "I'm not tho vewy hungry," out of consideration for his feelings—no jaded mother sitting over there on the sofa, with the rest of the lean brood clinging to her skirts, whilst she allows herself to fall into the last stages of despair. We know that Peg Woffington did *not* appear, followed by a negro boy carrying a basket of provisions—that she did *not* help the starving family to lay the table with the food that was to go into those empty stomachs—that she did *not* laugh and chaff and drag them all up out of the depths, and finally call out to Triplet to take up his fiddle and play "The Wind that Shakes the Barley," while every one of them, including the wretched mother, danced a wild jig in the middle of the room. We know that none of these things happened. But we also know that they *might* have happened; that it is a beautifully imagined picture of what actually did happen over and over again.

CHAPTER V

KITTY CLIVE

KITTY CLIVE, honest, out-spoken, often coarse of speech but always clean in mind, good-natured, hot-tempered, loyal and true-hearted, was the greatest comic actress not only of her own but of all time. Her genius lifted her head and shoulders above all other performers in her own line, even as her unblemished character in private life raised her high above the atmosphere of gossip and scandal which clung to the reputations of the bulk of her contemporaries. She was by no means beautiful, but her exquisite sense of humour, her wit, her vivacity, her unbounded high spirits, her pertness and her infinite wonderful variety, made the plainness of her features of no account—indeed, it rather added to than detracted from her undisputed fascination. A born soubrette, an inimitable romp, she assured the success of even the dullest, most questionable of farces, infusing into every part she undertook a verve and irresistible comicality beyond the wildest dreams of its creator. Perhaps the best description of Kitty Clive is given in the single word "magnetic." She so impelled her audiences in the direction of smiles or tears, pathos or comedy, that they wept, smiled, laughed, and even, according to a contemporary critic, "giggled, tossed their heads and *sneezed* with her!"

The daughter of an Irishman, William Raftor, who fought for King James at the Battle of the Boyne, Kitty Clive was born in 1711, during the lifetime of Elizabeth Barry. She was early found to be the possessor of a voice, and studied singing under Henry Carey, composer of "Sally in Our Alley," at one time reputed to be the author of the National Anthem. But she appears to have been a better actress than a singer. According to Dr. Burney, "her singing, which was intolerable when she meant it to be fine, in ballad farces and songs of humour was, like her comic acting, everything it should be." Nevertheless, Chetwood records that Cibber, directly he heard her sing, put her down in the list of performers at twenty shillings a week, which was considered quite a respectable salary in those days.

Her first appearance at Drury Lane was in 1728, when she was only seventeen years of age. Drury Lane can hardly be said to have been in a very flourishing financial condition at the time, but it provided an excellent "school for acting" for Kitty Raftor, associated as she was with Mrs. Booth, Mrs. Oldfield, Mrs. Porter, Wilks, and Colley Cibber himself. The part allotted to her was that of *Ismenes*, a page, in the tragedy, "*Mithridates, King of Pontus.*" She wore boy's clothes and met, we are told, "with extraordinary applause."

In January of the following year she essayed her first serious part—*Dorinda* in "*The Tempest,*" with Mrs. Cibber as *Hippolita* and Mrs. Booth as *Miranda*. "*The Tempest*" was revived in 1730, on what was considered then a scale of great magnificence, "with scenes and machines and other decorations suitable to

the play." These attractions so "suitable to the play" included the following :—

"A Dance of the Four Winds, a Dance of Infernal Spirits as performed before the Grand Signior by the Eunuchs of the Seraglio at the Bairiam Feast. Also the song of 'Dear Pretty Youth' as composed by the late Mr. Henry Purcell, to be sung in the character of *Dorinda* by Miss Raftor."

She undertook a number of other characters during the seasons of 1729 and 1730, but her first great hit was in 1731, when she played *Nell* in "*The Devil to Pay.*" This part, with which she was henceforth to be identified, raised her to the position of prime favourite, and must take first place in the list of her successes. It led, *inter alia*, to an immediate and gratifying rise of salary.

Of her marriage to George Clive, brother to Sir Edward Clive, one of the Barons of the Exchequer, very little is known. Even the exact date is doubtful, but it evidently took place prior to 5th October, 1733, since on that date she appeared in the bills for the first time as "Mrs. Clive." What is certain is that the couple lived together for but a short time, and then parted by mutual consent.

During the next four years Kitty Clive played an astonishing number of parts at Drury Lane, including *Miss Jenny* in "*The Provoked Husband*" and *Betty* in "*The Way of the World.*" But a part that she appears to have made pre-eminently her own was that of the traditional chambermaid of comedy. This character of the intriguing chambermaid or lady's-maid has long ago died out, but in the period under review it was a regular institution. No old comedy or farce was considered complete without her; she had to be saucy

pert, amusing, an elegant liar, quick to seize her opportunities of playing off everybody against everybody else to her own advantage. Rival suitors for the hand of the fair maiden always sought the chambermaid as intermediary; on the winning of her favour depended more or less the success or failure of their suit. In this character Kitty Clive reigned supreme. "She played," says Davies, "the *Chambermaid* in every varied shape which art or nature could lend her." The fact that she was the possessor of a very pleasing singing voice added greatly to the strength and variety of her impersonations.

But it must not be thought that her talents as a comedy actress only shone to full advantage in this particular line. "Mrs. Clive," writes Fielding, "is esteemed by all as an excellent comic actress; she has a prodigious fund of national spirit and humour on and off the stage, she makes the most of the poets on it. Nothing, though ever so barren, even though it exceeds the limits of nature, can be flat in her hands. She heightens all characters of humour she attempts; nor is she confined only to the hoyden Miss or pert Chambermaid, but in spirited gay characters of high life she always appears with such air, mien, and action as speak the gay, lively, and desirable."

In 1733 came the famous revolt of the players at Drury Lane. The theatre, after the close of Cibber's management, passed into the hands of one bankrupt manager after another. The first to take up the reins was one John Highmore, a private gentleman, who made a bet with Lord Limerick at White's Club that he would play *Lothario* for one night. The enthusiasm which greeted his performance, and the fact that the theatre was crowded, appears to have filled him with

sudden madness, for he at once purchased shares in the theatre and became manager. At this period the players were not bound to have any regular agreement or contract with the management, and could practically leave without giving notice. Stirred up by Theophilus Cibber, who was in the company, the rest of the players, with the exception of Mrs. Clive and Mrs. Horton, joined him in a revolt against the managers, and refused to appear. "Though the actors were under no obligation to continue with the patentees," says Genest, "yet it does not appear that they had any particular grievance to complain of; and their return to Drury Lane so soon afterwards (in March, 1734) seems to prove that in this instance they acted capriciously and injudiciously."

The loyalty displayed by Kitty Clive on this occasion was the subject of an encomium from Fielding. In the preface to his farce, "*The Intriguing Chambermaid*," in which Kitty created the part of *Lettice*, he writes as follows: "The part you have maintained in this dispute between the players and patentees, of 1733, is so full of honour that had it been in higher life it would have given you the reputation of the greatest heroine of the age. You looked on the cases of Mr. Highmore and Mr. Wilks with compassion, nor could any promises or views of interest sway you to desert them; nor have you scrupled any fatigue (particularly the part which at so short a warning you undertook in this farce) to support the cause of those you imagined injured; and for this you have been so far from endeavouring to exact an exorbitant reward from persons little able to afford it, that I have known you to offer to act for nothing, rather than that the patentees should be injured by the dissensions of the audience."

After more homage to her behaviour on a particular occasion, Fielding goes on: "But great a favourite as you are at present with the audience, you would be much more so were they acquainted with your private character; could they see you laying out a great part of the profits which arrive to you for entertaining them so well in support of an aged father: did they see you, who can charm them on the stage with personating the foolish and vicious characters of your sex, acting in real life the part of the best wife, the best daughter, the best sister, and the best friend."

As to the expression "best wife" in the above it is curious to note that, shortly after the words were written, Kitty Clive and her husband parted, as we have seen, after a very short period of married life, for some reason which has never transpired. But the epithets "best daughter" and "best sister" were certainly fully deserved; for Kitty Clive supported her family and was in every respect a model daughter; while for her brother, "Jimmy" Raftor, a very poor actor, she did everything that was possible to advance him in his profession. We find him at the same theatre, where she no doubt got him engaged, and coupled with her in benefits, which he was certainly otherwise not entitled to. In spite of all her efforts, however, Raftor achieved no fame except that which was reflected on him by the greatness of his sister.

In 1742 Mrs. Clive accepted an invitation to go to Dublin with Quin, Ryan, and a dancer, Madame Chateneuf. They appeared at the theatre in Aungier Street, and the season commenced with "a brilliancy never known in Irish annals." Mrs. Clive aroused great enthusiasm by her *Lappet* in "*The Miser*." This part was one of the usual chambermaids, and Clive

was at her very best in it. Hitchcock says of her *Lappet* that "she certainly was one of the best that ever played it." He however goes on to say: "It will scarcely be credited that so finished a comic actress as Mrs. Clive could so far mistake her abilities as to play *Lady Townly* to Mr. Quin's *Lord Townly* and Ryan's *Manly; Cordelia* to Mr. Quin's *Lear* and Ryan's *Edgar*. However, she made ample amends by her performance of *Nell*, '*The Virgin Unmask'd*,' '*The Country Wife*,' and *Euphrosyne* in '*Comus*,' which was got up on purpose and acted for the first time in this kingdom."

Like so many of her contemporaries, Kitty Clive had throughout her career an inclination to play parts for which she was entirely unfitted. In the "Dramatic Censor" this propensity was commented upon as follows:—

"The applause with which she acted *Portia* for many years was disgraceful both to herself and to the audience; the spirited scene she spoke with the same delicacy as if she had been acting *Lappet* or *Flippanta*, and in the blank verse she was awkwardly dissonant. In the trial scene, which the author beyond a doubt meant to be solemn and affecting, she turned the whole into burlesque by her mimicry of some well-known lawyer. She was so absurd as to act *Zara* for her benefit in 1753; her voice was dreadful for serious speaking, her person rendered all the King's amorous compliments ludicrous, and justified Osmyn's coolness, even if he had had no other attachment."

Towards the end of her career her increasing age and bulk made this little weakness of hers a source of no little embarrassment to her manager, for she often insisted upon playing the part of quite a young girl,

nor would any amount of either severity or persuasion turn her from her purpose.

When Mrs. Clive returned to London at the close of the Dublin season, it was unfortunate that after all her sacrifices she should again find herself, during the Drury Lane season of 1742–3, under the direction of a spendthrift. Fleetwood, young and gay, with £6000 a year, now came into the patent in place of Highmore, who, broken and bankrupt, had retired abroad. Salaries were unpaid, mortgagees and bailiffs were in possession, and Macklin, who was acting as Fleetwood's deputy, declared himself unable to do anything to mend matters. The discontent which had been steadily growing among the players in consequence, came to a head in the following season. Garrick, who was nominally in receipt of an enormous salary—£630 and two "benefits"—found it a moral impossibility to get his money.

The smouldering spark of rebellion burst at last into flame, and, headed by Garrick, who was the prime mover in the affair, the players, who included Macklin, Barry, Mills, Mrs. Pritchard, and Kitty Clive, determined to leave and set up for themselves in the Haymarket.

Not only was this conspiracy totally unsuccessful, but it was the cause of bitter quarrels and recriminations amongst the conspirators themselves. The Duke of Grafton, to whom they had to apply for a licence for the little theatre in the Haymarket, bluntly refused to grant it. Meantime Fleetwood had quietly filled up his ranks with the best players he could manage to procure from the country, and the revolters found themselves left out in the cold. In the end, urged by the others, Garrick was obliged to give way igno-

miniously. Negotiations with Fleetwood were opened up, and the manager, thoroughly triumphant, and now able to pick and choose, promised to receive the players back on his own terms, but positively refused to reinstate Macklin, whom he held responsible for the whole trouble.

When Garrick, faced by disaster both to all the others as well as to himself, gave in, Macklin was furious. He taunted Garrick with treachery and with having induced the others to go back while leaving him, Macklin, out in the cold. Garrick did all he could to appease him, offering to pay him £6 a week out of his own pocket until Fleetwood could be induced to take him back, and promised, besides, to secure an engagement for Mrs. Macklin. Macklin's only reply was the issuing of a pamphlet assailing Garrick's honour; and on the night on which the latter appeared as *Bayes*, brought a crowd of supporters to the theatre, with the intention of driving Garrick from the stage. The presence, however, of a number of professional pugilists, hired by Fleetwood, frustrated Macklin's design, and the affair ended in his complete discomfiture.

Clive was another who had strongly disapproved of Garrick's weakness, as she considered it. Full of impulsive indignation she promptly went over to Covent Garden, where the management had for some time been holding out the bait of a higher salary than she was getting at Drury Lane. But the moment they saw that she was anxious to come, they reduced their offer, and she eventually found herself very little, if any, better off for the change.

In the season of 1745–6 we find her back at Drury Lane, having passed the interval in more quarrels and

bickerings with her new manager at Covent Garden. Clive was not a woman to sit down under a grievance. On 2nd November, 1744, was published an absurd diminutive pamphlet, entitled "The Case of Mrs. Clive, submitted to the Public." This contained a long vindication of her conduct, which she considered had been misunderstood by the public, and a recital of all the slights which had been shown her by the respective managers of the two patent theatres. The pamphlet vastly amused the town. Mrs. Clive had a fondness for rushing into print, in spite of the fact that she was as notoriously weak in her grammar as in her spelling.

In 1747 began her long connection with Garrick, who had now become manager of Drury Lane; she remained with him for twenty-two years as "leading comick" or "singing chambermaid." With such players around her as Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Pritchard, Peg Woffington, Barry, and Macklin, Mrs. Clive's powers rapidly matured, and it was during this period that she rose to the full height of her ability as an actress. Amongst the vast number of characters with which she enchanted the town we may single out her *Nell* in "*The Devil To Pay*," *Lappet* in "*The Miser*," half a dozen *Kittys*, but above all *Kitty* in "*High Life Above Stairs*," *Muslin* in "*The Way to Keep Him*," and *Mrs. Heidelberg* in "*The Clandestine Marriage*"—all of them her own creations—as those which served to display her genius to particular perfection.

Between Kitty Clive and her manager there existed a curious hostility that was, strange as it may seem, largely composed of mutual admiration. Quarrels between them were of such frequent occurrence that the attention of the whole town became focussed upon them, their eternal wrangles becoming the subject

KITTY CLIVE.

(In the character of Mrs. Heidelberg.)

of much amused comment. Clive was easily aroused to a sense of injury, and, at the slightest hint of oppression, flew off at a tangent and never rested until her grievances were redressed. Many a *mauvais quart d'heure* did she cause Garrick. Tate Wilkinson said: "She knew every sore place in that sensitive being, and could make his withers wince whenever she pleased." She was the one player of whom he was afraid, and, probably for that reason, his admiration of her was very great. He always called her his "Pivy," or his "Clivy Pivy," and seems to have had a very real affection for her, in spite of their bickerings. He treated her with the greatest indulgence, and though she tried his patience sorely, would strive to ignore the bitterness of her tongue. It was odd that she should have so loved to torment him, for at bottom she admired him immensely. She imagined that he disliked her, and chafed because she fancied that he denied her the full recognition of her powers. This antagonism, more imaginary than real, lasted throughout the long spell of years during which she remained under his management, nor is it easily explained. Mr. John Taylor, one of the editors of "The Sun," suggests that as she was eminent before Garrick's appearance, his love of excelling threw her and others in the shade, and in consequence, she took every opportunity of venting her resentful spleen. And yet the following incident, narrated by Taylor, shows how greatly she really admired him:—

"One night," says Taylor, "as he was performing *King Lear*, she stood behind the scenes to observe him, and in spite of the roughness of her nature, was so deeply affected, that she sobbed one minute and abused him the next, and at length overcome by his pathetic

touches, she hurried from the place with the following extraordinary tribute to the universality of his powers—'Damn him! I believe he could act a *gridiron!*'"

As she grew older her temper became more soured and her sense of injury more keen. It was well known that Garrick came to dread an altercation with her so much, that he would humour her and yield the point in dispute, sooner than be involved in another *fracas*. Once when she was growing too old for young parts, she wanted to play the character of *Miss Prue* in "*Love for Love*"—the character of a girl of sixteen! Garrick could only get the part from her by giving her that of *Mrs. Frail*, for which she was equally unsuited.

Mrs. Clive's letters to Garrick, couched in the most violent language, were as frequent as her quarrels in person. In the main his letters in reply were soothing (or meant to be so), and, better still, he often answered them not at all. On one occasion when she sent him "a violent scolding letter" on recovering from an illness, he wrote in reply congratulating her on her recovery, and added: "I am very glad you are come to your usual spirits."

Later on, however, she came to her senses and allowed him to see how much she thought of him. After her retirement the correspondence which continued between them became more and more friendly in tone. In one of her letters, written on the eve of his retirement in 1776, the following passages occur:—

". . . While I was under your control, I did not say half the fine things I thought of you, because it looked like flattery: and you know your Pivy was always proud, besides, I thought you did not like me; but now I am sure you do, which makes me send you this letter. . . . What a strange jumble of people they have

put in the papers as the purchasers of the patent! I thought I should have died of laughter when I saw a man-midwife (Dr. Ford) amongst them. I suppose they had taken him in to prevent *miscarriages!* I have some opinion of Mr. Sheridan, as I hear everybody say he is very sensible; then he has a divine wife, and I loved his mother dearly. Pray give my love to my dear Mrs. Garrick; we all join in that. I have once since the snow been out in my carriage. Did you not hear me scream?" She concludes by asking him to reinstate her *protégée*, Miss Pope, who had been so unfortunate as to offend him. This Garrick did, and affectionately endorsed the letter, "My Pivy Excellent."

It was, however, not only with her manager that Kitty Clive was constantly embroiled. In the green-room her peppery temper was dreaded by all. Impetuous, frank, and outspoken to the point of positive rudeness, she was for ever giving offence to the other leading ladies. "Scenes" were of almost daily occurrence with one or other of them (always excepting her great friend, Mrs. Pritchard). Peg Woffington was the object of her particular aversion, and hostilities between them were the cause of much scandal, as has already been recorded in the preceding chapter.

Between Clive and one of the male performers there was an antipathy that often developed into actual warfare. That performer was Woodward; he and Clive being wildly jealous of one another. Neither seemed to be willing to co-operate with the other, chiefly because the touchy actress imagined that he was always struggling for his own hand. This jealousy and lack of sympathy was even extended to the actual boards, and resulted in comical *dénouements*.

Once, during "*The Taming of the Shrew*," then called "*Catherine and Petruchio*," a strange scene took place. As Woodward made his exit he threw down Mrs. Clive with such violence, says Wilkinson, "as to convince the audience that *Petruchio* was not so lordly as he assumed to be." The actress was so furiously enraged at this treatment that "her talons, tongue, and passions were very expressive to the eyes of all beholders, and it was with the utmost difficulty that she suppressed her indignation."

On a subsequent occasion another amusing passage occurred between this hot-tempered pair. Davies tells us that this "caused such repeated laughter in the theatre as I scarcely ever heard."

During a performance of "*The Double Dealer*" Clive had, as *Lady Froth*, by mistake or in a hurry, laid on more rouge than usual. Woodward, who played the valet, instead of saying "*Your coachman having a red face*," said "*Your ladyship has a red face.*" Peal upon peal of laughter rang through the theatre, and Woodward pretended to be utterly abashed and confounded. On this occasion, however, Clive bore the incident with fortitude. When they returned to the green-room, the players expected a terrible scene would follow. The inimitable actress disappointed them. "Come, Mr. Woodward," she said gravely, "let us rehearse the next scene, lest more blunders should fall out."

It was always Mrs. Clive's fate to furnish amusement to the town. Towards the end of her life her orthography improved and she dropped some of her colloquialisms, but one letter to the "low comedian," Edward Shuter, shows that even in 1761 she could write the most astonishing epistles when under the

influence of excitement. Shuter was very much in her bad books, because, some one having written to the papers a letter exhorting the public not to go to her benefit because she was giving a French farce, she had fixed upon Shuter as the writer of it. He, with malice, had her letter printed verbatim. It ran as follows:—

"Sir,

"I much Desire you would do me the Favour to let me know if you was the author of a letter in 'The Dayle Gazeteer' relating to the New Piece I had for my benefet; as it was intended to hurt my Benefet and serve yours, everybody will naturely conclude you was the author if you are not ashamed of being so I suppose you will own it: if you really was not concerned in wrighting it I shall be very glad: for I should be extremely shocked that an actor should be guilty of so base an action; I don't often take the liberty of wrighting to the Publick but am Now under a Nessity of Doing it—therefore Desier your answer."

It may be added that Shuter, to clear himself, swore an affidavit before a magistrate that he was innocent.

Kitty Clive's last appearance upon the stage was on 24th April, 1769, although she was only fifty-eight years of age and could have continued to delight the town for fully ten years longer. The plays chosen for her farewell performance were "*The Wonder*" (which later Garrick was to choose for his final effort) and "*Lethe*," in which she gave her incomparable *Fine Lady*. Garrick played *Don Felix* in "*The Wonder*," King, *Lissardo*, and Mrs. Barry, *Violante*—a fine cast, Mrs. Clive making *Flora* equal to *Felix* and

Violante. Drury Lane was packed, and had it been larger twice the number of people would have found seats. Clive, after forty years of service on the stage, took her leave in a weak and tasteless epilogue, written for her by Horace Walpole.

She has never had a real successor. Her sense of humour, her infectious laughter, her innate love of fun, and, in her young days, her marvellous vitality and enthusiasm, carried her to a position which has never been equalled on the comic stage. Her spirits seemed to be always bubbling over, sometimes in the wrong place. Garrick was the most rigid man in the world as regards stage discipline, yet even he was not always proof against her incorrigible habit of joking during the performance of a play. Once, when they were acting together in "*The Way to Keep Him*," Clive whispered some witticism in his ear. Taken off his guard for the moment, he was rendered speechless, and after making two or three ineffectual efforts to find his tongue, was obliged to retire, followed by roars of laughter from the audience.

In spite of her exhibitions of temper and "contrariness," Kitty Clive strikes us as having been a genuine character. She was loyal and faithful to those under whom she served. She was passionately devoted to her profession, and made it the first object in her life. Although separated from her husband, the breath of scandal never once touched her name. Her warm temper and her proneness to take offence were blemishes in a character otherwise distinguished by common sense and good feeling. Champion of the down-trodden—generous encourager of the youthful aspirant—firm in her friendships—implacable in her hatreds—downright in her opinions—plucky, honest

and high above all petty meanness—Kitty Clive stands for a sterling good sort, who added to the gaiety of nations, and whose very faults and weaknesses endeared her to some of the most distinguished persons of her day.

Amongst these was Dr. Johnson, who called her "the best player he ever saw." He was a great admirer of hers, and used to sit beside her in the green-room listening to her witty stories; "a good thing to sit by," was how he described her on one occasion.

Henry Fielding was another great admirer of hers. He wrote "*The Intriguing Chambermaid*" in 1734, having adapted it from Regnard especially for her. In 1735 he wrote another farce, "*The Virgin Unmask'd*," which was obviously intended to display the talents of Clive. In it she was provided with her favourite part of *Hoyden*. She herself was reputed the authoress of two plays, called respectively "*The Rehearsal, or Bayes in Petticoats*," and "*Every Woman in her Humour*." The former was produced by Garrick in 1750 and the latter in 1760. It was the opinion of many, however, that Fielding had taken a large part in their creation. In any case, neither play achieved much success.

But her greatest friend, and one whose companionship she enjoyed to the end of her life, was Horace Walpole. He made her a present of "little Strawberry Hill" at Twickenham, close to his own house, and christened it "Cliveden." Up to the time of her retirement she was only there occasionally—that is to say between the theatrical seasons—but after her farewell to the stage she took up her residence there altogether, having her brother, Jimmy Raftor, to live with her. To him she had clung tenaciously all her

life. He was, as Lord Nuneham described him, "a wretched actor, hideous in person and face, and vulgarly awkward in his general appearance—but a man of much observation and possessing an extraordinary fund of original humour. In his talent of telling a story he was unrivalled. One of his stories no doubt he told with humour; that of a town lady, who, being asked why she did not live in the country, said she had 'just bought some rural object—a cuckoo clock.'" This entertaining fellow attracted Walpole, who conceived quite a friendship for him, and always invited him with his more gifted sister. At all *petits soupers* Raftor was to be found in her company. Even at the Coronation, when seats were so eagerly sought after, Walpole found a place for him at his town house, amongst the ladies of title.

"Raftor," said Walpole in 1770, "has left the stage. Mrs. Clive has very kindly taken him to live entirely with her, and I hear he is exceedingly happy at it."

Jimmy Raftor died in 1790, some five years after his gifted sister. A friend recalled one last touch of his character. "We remember," he says, "her acting *Bayes* in '*The Rehearsal*' with her brother, a very inferior actor, speaking, as usual, like a mouse in a cheese, in the character of *Bold Thunder!* 'O fie, Mr. Raftor,' said she; 'speak out like a man. Surely you might have learned more assurance from your sister!'"

Mrs. Clive spent a very happy old age at Cliveden, taking part in pleasant little card and supper parties, and enjoying the society of her large circle of friends and acquaintances. Men and women of "quality," actors, authors, distinguished people of all sorts helped to make her retirement pleasant. The Thames Valley was at that time a favourite locality for actors

and actresses. The Garricks were at Hampton; Bellamy at Richmond; Clive, Abington, and Mrs. Pritchard at Twickenham. Amongst Mrs. Clive's near neighbours were Sir John Hawkins, Lady Tweeddale, George Steevens and many others equally well known.

Mrs. Clive gave delightful little parties at Cliveden, and a brilliant company would often cross the meadows from Horace Walpole's house to partake of the hospitality of his old friend. Walpole's letters contain many allusions to her, and from them a delightful picture can be drawn of the intimacy that gave so much pleasure to both. As early as 1748, long before Clive's retirement, he writes in a letter to George Montagu :—

"I am now expecting the house of Pritchard, Dame Clive, and Mrs. Methlegan to dinner. I promise you the Clive and I will not show one another our pleasure during the banket time, nor afterwards. . . . Our dinner passed off very well, the Clive was very good company; you know how she admires young Asheton's preaching. She says she is always vastly good for two or three days after his sermons; but by the time that Thursday comes, all their effect is worn out."

In 1754, writing to Sir Richard Bentley, he says: "My chief employ in this part of the world, except surveying my library, which has scarce anything but the painting to finish, is planting at Mrs. Clive's whither I remove all my super-abundancies. I have lately planted the green lane that leads from her garden to the common. 'Well,' said she, 'when it is done, what shall we call it?' 'Why,' said I, 'what would you call it but Drury Lane?'"

In the same letter he writes *apropos* of his own house at Strawberry :—

"I never come up the stairs without reflecting how different it is from its primitive state, when my Lady Townshend, all the way she came up the stairs, cried out: 'Lord God! Jesus! What a house! It is just such a house as a parson's, where the children lie at the foot of the bed!'" Then he goes on: "I can't say that to-day it puts me much in mind of another speech of my lady's 'that it would be a very pleasant place if Mrs. Clive's face did not rise upon it and make it so hot!' The sun and Mrs. Clive seem gone for the winter."

In many of Walpole's letters we find him making sly digs, on his own account, at his beloved friend's little oddities of appearance or temperament.

"You never saw anything so droll," he writes in one place, "as Mrs. Clive's countenance between the heat of summer, the pride in her legacy, and the effort to appear unconcerned." Again: "Strawberry is in perfection; the verdure has all the bloom of spring; the orange trees are loaded with blossoms; the gallery is all sun and gold; and Mrs. Clive all sun and vermilion."

Kitty Clive grew tremendously stout long before she left the stage, and when Hounslow Powder Mills blew up, Walpole described the terrific power of the explosion by remarking that it "almost shook Mrs. Clive!"

In a letter to the Countess of Ailesbury in 1778, Walpole writes: "Poor Mrs. Clive has been robbed again in her own lane, as she was last year, and has got the jaundice, she thinks with fright. I don't make a visit without a blunderbuss; so one might as well be invaded by the French."

Towards the end his old crony fell into ill-health, and we find a note of anxiety creeping into his letters.

Thus, in 1782: "Poor Mrs. Clive is very declining, but has been better of late; and, which I am glad of, thinks herself better." When she died three years later, namely, on December 6th, 1785, he gave, in a letter to Lady Browne, the following simple and unaffected account of her death:—

"My good old friend is a great loss; but it did not much surprise me, and the manner comforts me. I had played at cards with her at Mrs. Gostling's three nights before I came to town, and found her extremely confused and not knowing what she did; indeed, I perceived something of the sort before, and had found her much broken this autumn. It seems that the day after I saw her she went to General Lister's burial and got cold, and had been ill for two or three days. On the Wednesday morning she rose to have her bed made; and while sitting on the bed, with her maid by her, sunk down at once and died without a pang or groan. Poor Mr. Raftor is struck to the greatest degree, and for some days would not see anybody. I sent for him to town to me; but he will not come till next week."

Walpole himself felt the loss of his old friend keenly. To mark his appreciation of her, he set up an urn in his garden to her memory—a testimonial then in fashion—with this inscription:—

"Ye smiles and tears still hover round;
This is Mirth's consecrated ground.
Here lived the laughter-loving dame,
A matchless actress, Clive her name.
The comic Muse with her retired,
And shed a tear when she expired."

CHAPTER VI

MRS. PRITCHARD

MRS. PRITCHARD, for forty years the close friend of Kitty Clive, was a woman of unimpeachable character. Indeed, these two cronies—contemporaries of Peg Woffington and George Anne Bellamy, whose lapses from virtue were innumerable, and of Mrs. Cibber, whose one lapse was so notorious—were shining examples of honest respectability and clean living in an age not too particular as to the morals of those who figured upon the boards. Neither could boast of much physical beauty it is true, but only the most cynical would impute their fair fame entirely to this fact. Both, when young, must have been boundlessly attractive in spite of plainness of feature. Kitty Clive with her twinkling eyes and saucy tongue, her vivacity and the irresistible gaiety of her spirits, must have had admirers by the score; whilst Mrs. Pritchard, as a young married woman, whose husband held a quite subordinate position in the theatre, and who, judging by the absence of anything but the most casual mention of him in the annals of that time, must have been a somewhat insignificant person—cannot have failed to find plenty of temptation waiting at her elbow. Genius has a beauty transcending mere physical perfection, and Hannah Pritchard, so richly endowed with the former, would doubtless have

found her shortcomings in the latter no obstacle had she been inclined to follow the easy path trodden by so many of her fairer sisters of the stage.

Born in the same year as Kitty Clive, 1711, Hannah Pritchard resembled her friend in character and temperament to a degree that no doubt accounted largely for the sympathy that existed between them. Both had the same downright honesty of purpose, the same frank outspokenness, the same lusty independence that flew to arms at the slightest hint of oppression. They shared the same ambitions and worked for the same ends, and when the time came for them to end their labour, both could look back without a shadow of regret and say that it had been well done.

Little is known of the early life of Mrs. Pritchard beyond the date of her birth and the fact that her maiden name was Hannah Vaughan. A Miss Vaughan and a Miss P. Vaughan appear in the play-bills about the time that Mrs. Pritchard is first heard of, but it has been proved that although they might possibly have been her sisters, they most certainly were neither of them the lady with whom we are concerned. It is under her married name that we first find her playing *Lady Diana Talbot* in "*Anne Boleyn*" at Goodman's Fields, and soon after at Fielding's and Hippisley's booth at Bartholomew Fair. Here, in 1733, she took the part of *Loveit* in an opera called "*A Cure For Covetousness.*" In this she sang a song beginning "Sweet, if you love me, smiling turn," with such effect, that a writer in the "Daily Post" wrote some rhymes in her honour. He spoke of this performance as her first attempt and predicted for her "a transportation to a brighter stage." He proved to be a true prophet. When Highmore's principal actors at Drury Lane

revolted from him in 1733 and set up for themselves in the Haymarket, Mrs. Pritchard applied to them for employment, and was received with open arms. This shows that she must have already given a hint of the powers within her, and have been regarded as a very promising recruit. The theatre opened on the 26th September. Coffey's "*Devil To Pay*" was given as the after-piece and Mrs. Pritchard was entrusted with the part of *Nell*. Throughout that season she played a wide range of parts: *Dorcas* in the "*Mock Doctor*," *Lappet* in "*The Miser*," *Edging* in "*The Careless Husband*," *Sylvia* in "*The Double Gallant*," *Ophelia*—and others so numerous that it is clear she must have had a much wider experience than can be accounted for by the meagre record of her upbringing and training, which is all that can be found.

When, in 1734, the seceders closed the Haymarket and returned to Drury Lane, Mrs. Pritchard had earned too high a reputation to be left out in the cold altogether, so she was received by Fleetwood along with the others. For some reason or other, however, the manager was prejudiced against her, and notwithstanding her just claim to a fair hearing, he persisted in keeping her in the background. Time after time she was cast for small parts entirely unworthy of the genius which she had so far had no genuine opportunity of displaying to advantage. When Mrs. Cibber made her brilliant début as *Zara*, Mrs. Pritchard was given the inferior part of *Selima*. No one seems to have suspected the powers, in both tragedy and comedy, that lay hidden beneath the quiet unassuming exterior of the new actress, so lately little more than a wandering player among the booths of the suburban fairs. Whilst Mrs. Clive was triumphantly marching forward without

hindrance to the brilliant position that was already waiting for her, and Mrs. Horton, who had little but her beauty to recommend her, was tasting to the full the delights of an assured popularity, Mrs. Pritchard, who was greater than either, was plodding doggedly on in the very lowest ranks of performers. "Walking-on" parts, "one-line" parts, "old-women" parts—anything she could get thrown to her—Mrs. Pritchard snatched at with the enthusiasm of the real artist for her profession. Modest, plain of feature, painstaking and persevering, her climb to the heights of fame was very slow. Step by step she literally forced her way up the ladder. When she did reach the topmost rung, it was to stand firmly established, without once wavering or looking back.

In 1735 her chance came. Fleetwood, impressed no doubt by her indomitable spirit, at length gave her the part of *Rosalind* in "*As You Like It*," and from that moment it became impossible to keep her in the background any longer. Her magnificent delivery of the dialogue; her wit and liveliness; her charming voice; her mastery of technicalities, all took the house by storm. Her appearance at this time was attractive, in spite of lack of beauty. She was still very young, and the stoutness which disfigured her later years was not in evidence. On the contrary, we are told that she was actually slender, with a simple natural manner and an expressive face that lighted up with every emotion of love or hate, and caused her plainness to be forgotten. The town was delighted with her and congratulated itself on having found a rising genius of the very first rank.

From *Rosalind* Mrs. Pritchard passed on to all the light comedy parts at that time so much in favour.

Her *Lady Betty Modish*, her *Maria*, her *Beatrice* were excellent, all those parts, in fact, which depended for their success upon naturalness, archness and vivacity. But in the representation of elegant fashionable ladies she was not so successful. She was totally uneducated, and of humble, although respectable, origin. The airs and graces of a *Lady Townly* or a *Lady Betty Modish* were beyond her range of experience, and although her interpretation of these characters was admired by a few enthusiasts, the best judges pronounced them to be unsuccessful. Her scolds and viragos, however, were famous, her *Termagant* in "*The Squire of Alsatia*," her *Doll Common* and her *Mrs. Oakley* being unsurpassed.

Mrs. Pritchard and Garrick as *Beatrice* and *Benedict* afforded one of the theatrical treats of their time. In these two parts both struggled to surpass each other in the eyes of the public, and so inimitable was their performance that it would be difficult to say which of them bore off the palm.

So far we have only dealt with Mrs. Pritchard's powers in comedy, the branch of her art in which she first leapt to fame. It is in tragedy, however, that she is best remembered. Her performance of *Lady Macbeth* swept audiences off their feet. Her "Give *me* the daggers" and "Are you mad?" sent cold shivers down the spine. In the sleep-walking scene, the horror of her sigh and the sleepiness of her voice were things all her own; even Mrs. Siddons, who came later and was the greatest *Lady Macbeth* of all time, could not surpass her in these. Some of Mrs. Pritchard's admirers who lived to see Mrs. Siddons refused to be turned from their allegiance. Even Lord Harcourt, an enthusiast over Mrs. Siddons, confessed that in her *Lady Macbeth*

MRS. PRITCHARD.

he missed "the unequalled compass and melody of Mrs. Pritchard's." Her enunciation was perfect. Every word, even when uttered in a whisper, penetrated to the furthest corner of the house. Her beautiful diction was only acquired after long years of toil and struggle, for in private life she was homely and her pronunciation not beyond reproach. An "inspired idiot" Dr. Johnson called her. He declared that she spoke of her gown as "gownd," and that she had read no more of "*Macbeth*" than her own lines handed to her by the prompter. "It is wonderful how little mind she had," he once said; "she no more thought of the play out of which her part was taken than a shoe-maker thinks of the skin out of which the piece of leather with which he is making a pair of shoes is cut." There may have been some justice in this indictment, but the fact remains that Mrs. Pritchard's genius in certain rôles was never for one moment denied by the audiences of her day. Her *Zara* in the "*Mourning Bride*," her *Queen* in "*Hamlet*," and above all her *Queen Katharine, wife of Henry VIII* have never been excelled. The town went mad over the rival excellences of Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber and Mrs. Yates. Three such tragediennes, all at the summit of their powers, and all claiming the attention of the public at the same time, was almost an *embarras de richesses*. No wonder that opinions varied and feeling ran high. Garrick assured Tate Wilkinson that he did not approve of Mrs. Pritchard in tragedy, for her scenes of grief were "tiresomely blubbering," while the unfortunately prejudiced Dr. Johnson declared her good but affected in her manner. On another occasion he called her a "mechanical player." Richard Cumberland and Dibdin, however, considered her superior to Mrs. Cibber. Walpole, who admired her

greatly, praised her *Maria* and also her *Beatrice*, which he preferred to that of Miss Farren. Later on, when Mrs. Pritchard became fat and unwieldy, he made fun of her *Jane Shore*, but that his opinion of her always remained high is proved by the fact that when she was about to leave the stage, in 1768, he writes of his tragedy, "*The Mysterious Mother*":—

"I am not yet intoxicated enough with it to think it would do for the stage, though I wish to see it acted; but as Mrs. Pritchard leaves the stage next month, I know nobody could play *The Countess*."

Mrs. Pritchard became a neighbour of Walpole's, for she purchased Ragman's Castle, a villa on the Thames, between Marble Hill and Orleans House. There she was within reach of her friend Mrs. Clive, and Walpole mentions her several times in his letters. She was his guest from time to time, although he sneers at her son, who was treasurer at Drury Lane, as being "better than he expected." History is as silent about Mrs. Pritchard's private life as it is about her youth. She was a good wife and a good mother, and apart from her appearances on the stage her days were probably humdrum enough. She was not the kind of woman who provides material for the biographer—no lurid details are to be found, no scandals, no complications of any sort. She was just an honest, slightly uneducated woman, straight as a die—into whose by no means beautiful body had been enshrined the soul of a great artist. No actress of her day was more revered and beloved than she was. Her unblemished private life, her freedom from petty jealousy, her liberal kind-hearted outlook upon the world about her endeared her to everybody with whom she came in contact.

The début of Mrs. Pritchard's daughter at Drury

Lane in 1756 caused quite a sensation. Miss Pritchard had an exquisitely pretty face, but in spite of the fact of having had the advantage of tuition from Garrick, she never became more than a tolerable actress. Her mother's anxiety that she should turn out well was pathetic. "*Romeo and Juliet*" was chosen as the play in which the débutante was to appear, and Mrs. Pritchard played the unimportant part of *Lady Capulet*, in order that her daughter might be introduced to the public as *Juliet*. It was fortunate for both that Mrs. Pritchard was so adored by her audience, for the performance certainly contained much that was irregular. As the play progressed it became apparent that the daughter's excessive timidity was likely to wreck her chances of success, and that, on the other hand, the mother's apprehension that her child was not doing herself justice was rapidly becoming little less than an agony. Whenever they were on the stage together they threw appealing glances at one another—on the one side for support, on the other of encouragement—until at last the play must have become almost unrecognizable. The audience, however, instead of showing disapproval, applauded vigorously, with tears of sympathy in their eyes, and the situation was saved.

Miss Pritchard married Mr. John Palmer, a second-rate player of a variety of parts, and, as Mrs. Palmer, continued on the stage until 1768, the year of her mother's retirement. In spite of her mediocrity she received a good deal of indulgence from the public out of respect for her mother; but she must always have laboured at a disadvantage, knowing that, however strenuous her efforts, her performances were always being compared with those of her mother and that she suffered by the comparison.

Mrs. Pritchard continued to play up to an advanced age in spite of what was a very real handicap—excessive stoutness. She even played *Millamant* with success, although her age and figure were quite unsuitable. Davies says: "Notwithstanding the fulness of her person, and her advanced age, the town was charmed to the last with her representation of Congreve's delightful portrait of wit, affectation, and good nature in *Millamant*. Her disengaged manner in speaking and action supplied the want of an elegant form and a youthful countenance."

Mrs. Pritchard now began to think of retiring for a well-earned rest. She had a considerable fortune, part of which was left to her by a distant relative named Leonard, an attorney of Lincoln's Inn, and she determined after paying her farewell to the public to settle down at Bath and there spend a peaceful old age.

Her farewell benefit was fixed for the 24th April, 1768. Out of regard for her, Garrick gave one of his masterly performances of *Macbeth*, which he played in a brown court suit laced with gold, and she the *Lady* for the last time. That night she was inspired. The audience sat holding its breath lest it should lose a syllable of such an intellectual treat as it was not likely to see again in a lifetime. Mrs. Pritchard "presented an image of a mind insensible to compunction, and inflexibly bent to gain its purpose." When she seized the daggers a shudder of horror went through the house. The effect must have been terrific. The audience was deeply moved, and when at the close of the performance Mrs. Pritchard came forward to speak the epilogue written for her by Garrick there was not a dry eye in the house. She herself could hardly speak; the parting with her friends

before the footlights affected her too deeply. With a trembling voice she delivered the lines provided for her :—

> "In acted passion, tears must seem to flow,
> But I have that within me that passeth show."

At the close of the epilogue she was sobbing, and the audience, after giving her a tremendous ovation, filed silently out of the house.

By an irony of fate Mrs. Pritchard did not live to enjoy the long period of leisure to which she had so looked forward. Only a few months after her retirement she met with a trifling accident to her foot; mortification set in, and almost before the seriousness of her condition could be realized this beloved and faithful servant of the public was dead. A monument to her memory was erected in Poet's Corner, Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER VII

MRS. YATES AND ANNE BARRY

MRS. YATES, a tragedienne of the very first rank, was unfortunate in that she happened to live at a period of theatrical history when the highest walks of tragedy already possessed such representatives as Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Cibber, and Anne Barry. The two former robbed her more or less easily of the full measure of fame that was her due, but with Anne Barry the contest was more even; although, had it not been for the excellence of the latter, Mrs. Yates would have reigned undisputed "queen" until Mrs. Siddons arrived upon the scene to sweep her from the throne.

Maria Yates, known in her maiden days by the name of "Moll" Graham, was born, according to one of her biographers, in London in 1737; according to others, in Birmingham in 1728. She appears to have made her theatrical début in Dublin, under the management of Sheridan, in 1752. She, however, failed to please the public at that time, and Sheridan was glad to get rid of her at the price of a small sum of money by way of compensation. Far from being piqued at her failure to satisfy either her manager or her public, Maria Graham acknowledged that their estimate of her was just. Her voice was weak, and her figure corpulent; she, moreover, stood greatly in need of training,

both in elocution and in action. So acutely did she feel herself hindered by these defects that for a time she gave up all thoughts of the stage as a career. Urged on by necessity, however, she reconsidered her position, and in 1754 applied at Drury Lane for an engagement. She was given the part of *Julia* on the first night of the performance of the tragedy of "*Virginia*." Garrick spoke a prologue in which he mentioned the diffidence of the new actress and craved the indulgence of the audience on her behalf. In spite of this send-off her performance was not appreciated, and although she subsequently played *Jane Shore* and one or two other important parts in tragedy, her continued want of success resulted in her dismissal at the close of the season.

About this time she married Richard Yates. This sterling actor lost no time in devoting himself to the tuition of his wife. Under his anxious care, her talent, only lying dormant for want of a guiding hand, improved with amazing rapidity. Application was again made to Garrick, and he, perceiving how greatly her powers had benefited by the schooling she had received, once more found a place for her in his company, along with her husband. Both were given prominent parts, but it was a long time before Mrs. Yates could make any headway against Mrs. Cibber, whose superiority was undisputed. Had it not been for the sudden illness of the latter in 1759, Mrs. Yates might never have emerged from the obscurity in which the force of circumstances seemed likely to keep her.

In the year just mentioned Murphy's "*Orphan of China*" was produced at Drury Lane. In this play Garrick, Mossop, and Holland were to be the principal

actors, and Mrs. Cibber was to play the character of *Mandane*. Her health, however, was at this time so uncertain that the manager advised Murphy to reserve his play until she was stronger. But Murphy had great faith in the talented Mrs. Yates, and suggested to Garrick that she should be allowed to play the part —a suggestion that was brushed aside without ceremony. "Sir," said Garrick, "you had better wait until Mrs. Cibber's indisposition is abated." Murphy interviewed Mrs. Yates privately, and secured her promise to play the part on condition that he instructed her in it. She thereupon set to work and studied the part for an entire month with dogged perseverance, Murphy assisting and encouraging with all his might. Very reluctantly Garrick consented to give her an audition. When the time came, Mrs. Yates, in accordance with a cunning plan concocted by Murphy and herself, pretended to stumble over her lines and to be only indifferently acquainted with the part which she had in reality completely mastered.

The wily Murphy, who was determined that the powers of his favourite should not be displayed until she should be able to burst them upon the manager in their full glory, found his plans threatened with disaster. Garrick was so disgusted that it was with the greatest difficulty that he was persuaded to let her rehearse again in ten days' time. However, in the end Murphy prevailed, and when Mrs. Yates once more recited her part she scored a veritable triumph. The amazement of Garrick and all the other performers was unbounded. Garrick took Murphy aside and whispered to him excitedly, "This is the best thing that could happen; Mrs. Cibber's acting would be no novelty, but Mrs. Yates will excite the general admira-

MRS. YATES AS THE TRAGIC MUSE.

(Reciting the monody to the memory of Garrick.)

tion." This prophecy proved to be well founded. With her performance of *Mandane* Mrs. Yates leapt into the front rank in a single night, a position from which she never receded. The "*Orphan of China*" made an instant success, and was received for many nights with the greatest enthusiasm.

Murphy in his "Life of Garrick" tells an amusing story, *apropos* of the production of this tragedy. Mr. Fitzherbert gave a dinner at the Rose Tavern, near Drury Lane play-house, in honour of the production. Samuel Foote was amongst the guests invited to meet the author, who was in a state of not unnatural nervousness. In the middle of dinner the latter received a letter from Mrs. Cibber in which she expressed her regret that her name was not on the play-bill, as "she found herself in great spirits," but as it was now too late to make any alteration she desired to have a line as soon as the play was over, and, in the meantime, she said, "I shall offer up my prayers for your success." Murphy handed the letter to Foote, whereupon that wag first read it aloud and then returned it, making, with the utmost gravity, the following comment :— "Mrs. Cibber is a Catholic, *and they always pray for the dead*."

The occasion when Mrs. Yates first rehearsed her *Mandane* before Garrick does not seem to have been the only one on which she gained her ends by a display of strategy. When Dr. Franklin's tragedy "*The Earl of Warwick*" was given, Holland took the title part, and looked forward to eclipsing every one else who had ever essayed that popular character. Powell was equally satisfied with the part of *Edward*, with which he secretly hoped to bear off the palm. At rehearsals these two actors vied with each other in power of elocu-

tion and mastery of the characters with which they had been entrusted. Not so Mrs. Yates, who had scented from the first the possibility of being overshadowed to the point of extinction by these formidable competitors. The part of *Margaret of Anjou* ran the risk of failing to attract the audience when weighed against the merits of the two principal male characters. She therefore husbanded her resources at rehearsal, and endeavoured to make the character appear so pale and insipid that the others actually pitied her for having to play so small and unimportant a part. But lo, and behold! when the night of the actual performance arrived, *Margaret of Anjou* was acted with such dignity and grandeur, such pride, such resentment, such infinite pathos, that in the last scene she seemed to triumph over all her enemies, and gained the rapturous applause of all. By comparison, the *Earl of Warwick's* popular speeches and the dazzling grandeur of *Edward* made but a slight impression, much to the amazement and chagrin of the two actors concerned.

In the classical heroines of old tragedies such as this, Mrs. Yates established a very solid reputation. Her powers in tragedy ranged over a very extensive field, but she excelled chiefly in such characters as *Margaret of Anjou*, *Constance*, and *Semiramis*, where tempestuous rage and majestic imperiousness were required. She made the part of the sublime *Medea* so completely her own that even Mrs. Siddons thought discretion the better part of valour, and left her in sole possession of it. But it must be admitted that she lacked tenderness and variety of expression, and her *Desdemona* and *Monimia* were not quite so successful. Her pathos was not entirely convincing, while in

comedy she was a complete failure. Taking everything into consideration, Mrs. Yates's claim to remembrance by posterity must rest entirely on her greatness as a tragedienne, and then only in parts that were passionate, vindictive, and turbulent. There was an awful grandeur about her when portraying these. Her voice, long since cured of its tendency to feebleness, swept through every nook and cranny of the theatre, making the audience shiver or weep according to her will.

Mrs. Yates possessed considerable physical attractions. According to one contributor to "The Gentleman's Magazine," she was "beautiful even to the most poetic idea of beauty." In private life she was virtuous and respected. She was, however, hot-tempered when crossed, and inclined to give her managers trouble. That she was as haughty by nature as she was when playing her majestic heroines is very likely. Weston, when making his will, is said to have inserted the words: "To Mrs. Yates I leave all my humility."

Of a very different temperament was Anne Barry, sole competitor with Mrs. Yates for the throne of tragedy after the death of Mrs. Cibber in 1766, and the retirement of Mrs. Pritchard in 1768. Beautiful, warm-hearted, and impetuous, she secured to herself three husbands in turn, and, had time been given her, could no doubt have appropriated as many more in due succession. She was of fair complexion, with glossy, auburn hair, and a good figure. In her youth she was one of the belles of Bath, in which town her father was an apothecary. His name was Street, and his habits extravagantly gay. From him, doubtless, the lovely Miss Street inherited the rash temperament which, in the case of the last of her husbands at least,

led her into allowing her heart to run away with her head. Born in 1734, she was no older than seventeen when she fell in love with a gentleman of large fortune who frequented the fashionable parties to which the apothecary took his daughter. Her great beauty had at that time already excited much notice, and it is to be wondered at that the gentleman, who had not only won our heroine's heart but offered her his hand, should have failed to return from London, whither he had gone on business, to claim the jewel he had left behind at Bath. But such turned out to be the melancholy fact. Miss Street was left to pine and droop in such extreme dejection of spirits that her friends judged it wise to send her on a visit to some relations in Yorkshire, hoping, no doubt, that a bleaker climate might effect a cure by cooling the ardour of her affections. The result was a little more successful than they had bargained for. Miss Street recruited her spirits with such rapidity that she married an actor named Dancer, just then manager of a theatre at a neighbouring town, before her scandalized relatives had time to make a single remonstrance. That they made plenty afterwards—especially on learning that she intended to go on the stage herself, a proceeding of which they strongly disapproved—made very little impression on her. She set to work with a will, studied hard, and with youth, beauty, and genius to her credit, soon became an established favourite.

Her first appearance probably took place at Portsmouth in 1756. Afterwards, she and her husband are said to have appeared at York; but it was in Dublin, at Crow Street, then under the management of Woodward and Barry, that she made her first appearance of importance. The date, according to Hitchcock, was

8th November, 1758, when she played *Cordelia* to the *Lear* of Spranger Barry. This was followed by *Monimia* and many other tragedy parts, including *Desdemona*, *Juliet*, *Jane Shore*, and *Andromache*.

For nine years Mrs. Dancer remained in Dublin, labouring to perfect herself in her art. Although a favourite with the public from the first, it was some time before her genius received its full recognition, a fact that was in the end to her advantage, for it spurred her on to renewed efforts. Without this incentive, Mrs. Dancer might have drifted into a lower position as actress than she held ultimately. With it, her ascent, though at first slow, was never uncertain. By the time she left Dublin she had had a very wide experience in both comedy and tragedy, and when she appeared in London she stepped without the slightest hesitation into the very first rank.

By this time she had shaken off her husband, whose violent jealousy had been the cause of many quarrels between them. Long before she left Dublin she, like so many of her sex before and after, had fallen a victim to the fascination of the "silver-tongued" Barry. Madly in love with him, as he was with her, she crossed over to England in his company. This was in 1767, and Dancer was at that time still alive.

With Barry she accepted an engagement at the Haymarket, appearing as *Desdemona* to his *Othello*. The performance was so successful that the couple had little difficulty in securing an engagement at Drury Lane shortly afterwards. Both were offered very large salaries. In 1768 Mrs. Dancer's name appears for the first time as Mrs. Barry, so her husband's death may be inferred to have taken place in this year. He left her, as might be expected, without fortune, but she

could afford to snap her fingers at this fact, for she and her new husband, Barry, were accumulating money with the greatest ease and rapidity. Her beauty, accomplishments, and genius were now receiving all the recognition she could desire. She was as successful in comedy as she was in tragedy. *Lady Townly*, *Beatrice*, *Widow Brady*, and *Rosalind* were preferred by her to *Belvidera*, *Monimia*, *Desdemona*, and *Lady Randolph;* but, as a matter of fact, she was excellent in all. The equal of Woffington, and almost the equal of Mrs. Cibber in tragedy, she surpassed both in comedy. The critics of her time are loud in her praise in both lines of her art. Her *Lady Randolph* was unrivalled; in this part even Mrs. Siddons was her inferior. The latter owned to her fear of Mrs. Barry. In a letter to Dr. Whalley she wrote: "I should suppose she (Mrs. Barry) has a very good fortune, and I should be vastly obliged if she would go and live very comfortably upon it. . . . Let her retire as soon as she pleases."

Davies, writing whilst Mrs. Barry was still alive, says: "Every spectator of *Zenobia* must confess that it was not possible to say too much of her inimitable performance. Mrs. Barry knows perfectly well the ready avenues to the heart, and can rouse every latent spring of human feeling; she, if any actress can, will force lamentations from the obdurate, and sensibility from the obdurate!"

Mrs. Barry survived her illustrious husband, who died in 1777, by nearly a quarter of a century. Two years later, not satisfied with the matrimonial bliss already supplied her by the hand of fate, she, with characteristic impetuosity, rushed into a marriage with a spendthrift Irish barrister named Crawford. She

ANNE BARRY.

seems to have had a great affection for this young man, whose chief interest appeared to lie in getting as much out of the middle-aged widow as possible. He made ducks and drakes of her money, and the fine fortune she had amassed as the result of her labours was very soon dissipated. Crawford, a gentleman by birth and education, became actor and manager in Dublin, his wife accompanying him thither in 1781. He was so mean about money that his wife was often obliged to refuse to go on until he had collected the amount of her salary from the doorkeepers. This last marriage of hers was a wretched failure from every point of view. Tied to a man much younger than herself, whose affection, if it had ever existed, lasted no longer than the honeymoon, and who squandered her earnings as soon as they were placed in her hands, poor Anne Crawford's life became a misery. Her splendid vitality began to desert her ; all the verve and fire went out of her performances, she became languid and broken-spirited. Already it began to be whispered that her splendid day was over, and that it was time she gave place to some one younger than herself. The name of Mrs. Siddons, just then growing in popular estimation, was repeated on all sides, her fame having been wafted across the Channel. This was too much for the older actress to bear with equanimity. Leaving her despicable husband to fend for himself, she hurried jealously back to London to try to regain the position for which she had worked so hard. She was eagerly welcomed at Covent Garden, where she was engaged as a rival to Mrs. Siddons at the other theatre. Gathering herself together for a final spurt, she played *Lady Randolph* with all her old spirit, with such success that the "Morning Chronicle" declared that

she had no competitor. The contest with Mrs. Siddons, however, was not a fair one. The latter was in the zenith of her powers, whilst Mrs. Crawford was already setting towards the decline of hers. The younger woman, so dreaded yet so greatly admired, crept steadily upwards, until at last she reached such a favoured position that she was able to snatch the sceptre from the older woman's hand.

Mrs. Crawford's last appearance was at Covent Garden on the 16th of April, 1798. She died in 1801, and was buried, at her own request, near the remains of Spranger Barry, in Westminster Abbey.

To the last she had the satisfaction of knowing that she was superior to Mrs. Siddons in comedy, the branch of her art most loved by her, and also, in the opinion of some critics, in the pathetic parts of tragedy. In terrific scenes of elemental passion she knew that the younger actress outshone her as the moon outshines the stars, and she was only too grateful that this brilliant luminary should not have burst upon the world until her own appointed course was almost run.

Mrs. Barry, to call her by the name by which she is best remembered, did not approve of the school of acting founded by Mrs. Siddons. As an old lady she was heard to say: "The Garrick school was all *rapidity* and *passion;* while the Kemble school is so full of *paw* and *pause*, that at first the performers, thinking their new competitors had either lost their cues or forgotten their parts, used frequently to prompt them."

CHAPTER VIII

MRS. ABINGTON

A STRANGER, taking a stroll through the streets of Dublin in the year 1760, would find the word "ABINGTON" in large letters staring at him from the windows of every milliner's shop. Closer inspection would reveal to him the fact that the placard on which this word was printed was attached to a particular cap of becoming design. Should he possess sufficient curiosity to impel him to make enquiries, he would very soon ascertain that the cap had been originated by a new actress when playing the part of *Kitty* in "*High Life Below Stairs*," and that all the ladies of rank and fashion in Dublin were mad to possess the head-dress in question, hoping, no doubt, that they might be found to look as charming in it as did its originator.

Frances Abington, at one time just "Nosegay Fan," who sold flowers in the London streets, had indeed made an amazing bound upwards by the time we find her a leader of taste in dress in the city of Dublin. She was of humble origin, her father, whose name was Barton, being a cobbler, and her brother an ostler, who watered the horses of the Hampstead stage-coach at the corner of Hanway Yard. Having lost her mother when only fourteen years of age, Fanny, or Frances, Barton led a very precarious existence. The

poverty of her father made it necessary for her to turn out into the streets to earn a penny here and a penny there, as best she could. Sometimes she sold flowers; sometimes she hung about the doors of taverns singing or reciting; occasionally, on lucky days, she managed to obtain admission to the better class of coffee-houses, such as the Bedford or the Shakespeare. Then to the company there assembled she would recite various passages from the poets, until her somewhat plaintive efforts, combined with her beauty, would provoke a shower of coppers from the charitably disposed. Not a very edifying mode of life this for a young girl in her teens, but fortunately it did not last long. A slight improvement was effected when she became apprenticed to a French milliner, for whom she ran errands, and from whom she acquired some knowledge of the French language and that taste for elegance in dress which later on made her the rage in female society.

There is a good deal of conflicting evidence as to the date of her birth. Some biographers place it in 1731, others in 1735 or 1737, but in whichever year it took place, it is certain that it was of so little consequence to any one but her parents that no reliable record of it has been preserved. It was only at a very much later date, when the little flower-girl had blossomed out into one of the leading actresses of her day, that any effort was made to furnish her with some kind of pedigree and antecedents. Then it was discovered that there was good blood in her veins after all. Her descent was traced back to the reign of William the Third, at which time the Bartons of Derbyshire held a position of some distinction. The head of the family at that period was one Christopher Barton, who at his death left four sons—one in the Army, another

in a Government office, a third in the Church, and a fourth who was no less a personage than the grandfather of pretty "Nosegay Fan" herself. However, all this was, of course, unknown to her in her childhood's days. Innocent of any borrowed lustre of this sort, she continued to knock about the streets, exposed to the attentions of gay young sparks only too anxious to procure the favour of her smile. That she came out of all this with any tags of reputation left at all is greatly to her credit. We are told that although her early days were squalid and vicious, she "strove after a better life," and that although she had always been "poor, low, and vulgar, she was always anxious to acquire education and knowledge."

It was not very long before Fanny Barton turned her eyes towards the stage. She was intelligent and had great ability, had always had a taste for reciting and acting, and was boundlessly ambitious. Among the acquaintances she had acquired during these early years was Theophilus Cibber, who had procured a licence to open the theatre in the Haymarket. He had little difficulty in persuading her to attempt the part of *Miranda*, in the "*Busy Body*," to his *Marplot*. This she consented to do, and the play was given on the 21st of August, 1755. She was then only seventeen years of age, but her success was amazing for so young and inexperienced an actress. The critics present complimented her on her performance, and predicted a great future for her. Thus was Fanny Barton raised from an obscurity to which she was destined never to return. She was a born actress, and throughout the rest of that summer season showed great versatility, playing *Desdemona*, *Miss Jenny* in the "*Provoked Husband*," *Sylvia* in the "*Recruiting Officer*," and *Prince Pretty-*

man in "*The Rehearsal.*" Her *Desdemona* so gained the approbation of Mr. Shuter that he came behind the scenes and engaged her on behalf of Mr. Simpson, proprietor of the Bath Theatre, at that time under the management of King. From Bath, where she increased her reputation considerably, she proceeded to Richmond. There Lacy found her, and being delighted with her performances, promptly engaged her for Drury Lane.

Her first appearance at Drury Lane was on the 29th of October, 1756, when she played *Lady Pliant* in the "*Double Dealer*," Mrs. Pritchard playing *Lady Touchwood*, and Mrs. Clive, *Lady Froth*. On this occasion Miss Barton's name did not appear upon the playbills; she was simply announced as "a young gentlewoman appearing for the first time." Her second appearance was in the "*Virgin Unmasked*," when she played *Lucy*, and from that time onwards she was on the whole very successful, but did not advance as quickly as might have been expected owing to the popularity of Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Clive, and Miss Macklin. These ladies were in possession of all the best parts, and in consequence Miss Barton received only thirty shillings a week, and her appearances were very irregular. Her time, however, was by no means wasted. Spurred on by ambition, she worked hard to remedy the defects in her education, employing masters to teach her French, music, and elocution, and paying them out of her slender salary. Her music master was a Mr. James Abington, with whom she fell in love, and to whom she was married in 1759. This marriage was an unhappy one. Abington was jealous and exacting, his wife high-spirited and independent. As her popularity increased his jealousy increased also, and at last

things grew so unbearable that they parted by mutual consent. A regular agreement was drawn up, whereby she undertook to pay him an annual sum on condition that he never came near her or interfered with her again.

At the end of the Drury Lane season 1758–9 Mrs. Abington decided to leave London and try her fortune in Dublin. She was under the impression that Garrick did not appreciate her talents, and that he was keeping her in the background in order to avoid giving her a higher salary. Therefore, when Brown, the manager of Smock Alley Theatre in Dublin, invited her to come over and join his forces, and at the same time offered her the choice of all the leading parts, she gladly accepted his invitation. She arrived in Dublin in December, 1759, and made her first appearance on the Irish Stage on the 11th of that month, as *Mrs. Sullen* in "*The Stratagem*." Brown had made great preparations beforehand; had advertised her largely, and done his utmost to secure for her a crowded house. These efforts were successful. Mrs. Abington met with a very warm welcome from a well-filled house, and her performance was heartily applauded.

Her next appearance was as *Beatrice*, and was equally successful; in after years this became one of her most famous parts. Subsequently she played *Corinna*, *Clarinda*, *Violante*, *Lady Fanciful*, and a long list of well-known characters, her reputation increasing with every fresh appearance, in spite of many disadvantages under which she laboured. Of these, the failing popularity of Smock Alley Theatre, the hot rivalry of the Crow Street Theatre with its list of such popular stars as Barry, Woodward, Mossop, Mrs. Fitzherbert, and Mrs. Dancer,[1] and the frequency of their benefits

[1] Anne Barry.

which attracted the cream of the Dublin audiences, were the most important. The old house at Smock Alley was sinking rapidly. It was no longer considered fashionable, and Mrs. Abington not having received "the London stamp," was not such a draw as she would otherwise have been. Nevertheless, but for her, the theatre would have collapsed altogether.

In 1760, at Tate Wilkinson's benefit, she played her inimitable *Kitty* in "*High Life Below Stairs.*" Thenceforth there was to be no ambiguity as to her rightful position; by this performance she leapt at one bound into the very foremost rank of comic actresses. People were in raptures over her, blaming themselves for not having realized before the unique jewel they had got in their midst. She became the rage. Within ten days of this performance her clothes, her cap, her elegant manners, were the one topic of conversation in fashionable society. When the night of her own benefit arrived, her success exceeded her wildest hopes. She created a furore, and, in consequence, a party of influential people, anxious for her to appear in more favourable surroundings, persuaded her to play for a few nights at Crow Street, before the season ended. Accordingly she appeared at that theatre on the 22nd of May, 1760, in the characters of *Lady Townly*, and *Lucinda* in "*The Englishman in Paris.*" So crowded was the house that, although "part of the pit was laid into the boxes," a large number of people had to be turned away.

Woodward and Barry hastened to offer her the most favourable terms for the ensuing season, a fact unpalatable to Mrs. Dancer, who had until now played all the principal comedy parts, as well as tragedy, at Crow Street. "It was indeed no easy task," says Hitch-

cock, "to adjust the distribution of parts between her and Mrs. Dancer; however, it was agreed to divide them as near as possible with impartiality."

Mrs. Abington remained in Dublin for five years, playing a variety of favourite parts at either Crow Street or Smock Alley. She was, during this time, carried along on a rising tide of public favour. She was a prime favourite wherever she went, and the critics of her time were unanimous in her praise.

O'Keefe says: "Her manner was most charmingly fascinating, and her speaking voice melodious. She had peculiar tricks in acting; one was turning her wrist, and seeming to stick a pin in the side of her waist; she was also very adroit in the use of her fan; and though equally capital in fine ladies and hoydens, was never seen in low or vulgar characters. On her benefit night the pit was always railed into the boxes." Boaden writes of her: "She, I think, took more entire possession of the stage than any actress I have ever seen."

Mrs. Abington's voice, at one time harsh like Peg Woffington's, became, as a result of persistent effort and constant watchfulness, if not actually "melodious," as O'Keefe declares, at least adequately pleasant. Her perfect articulation gave it a clearness it did not by nature possess.

It is little to be wondered at that when Mrs. Abington returned to London, in 1756, Garrick should at once have invited her to join his company at Drury Lane, at a salary of £5 a week. The news of her successes had of course preceded her. She had become a person to secure at all costs, and although this salary does not sound as if it erred on the side of generosity, we must not lose sight of the fact that in those days it was con-

sidered a very liberal one. Mrs. Abington, at any rate, hastened to accept the offer, no doubt inwardly highly elated at the difference between her present position and the one she had previously held in the same theatre.

It was at first difficult to find a part for her at Drury Lane, for nearly all her Dublin successes were in the hands of Mrs. Pritchard and Mrs. Clive. At last the *Widow Belmour* in Murphy's "*Way to Keep Him*" was fixed upon. This she performed on 27th November, 1765, to a crowded house, which showed by the loudness of its applause that it did not consider the account of her triumphs in Ireland exaggerated. Her *Widow Belmour* continued to delight the public for a quarter of a century. It would be impossible to give an account, within the limits of this chapter, of all the successes, equally notable, made by this extraordinarily popular actress during the rest of her stage career, which lasted until 1798. She was the original representative of at least thirty characters, her crowning triumph being, of course, *Lady Teazle* in 1777.

Fine ladies by accident and not by birth, such as *Lady Teazle*, *Lady Racket*, and *Lady Fanciful*, Mrs. Abington could play to perfection. Her *Lady Betty Modish* was not so successful, and her chambermaids seem to have been rather overdressed. She was, however, excellent in coquettes, hoydens, and country girls; in fact, all the parts in which Kitty Clive had excelled. Her originality saved her from odious comparisons. In Shakespeare's *Beatrice*, says Davies, "she had difficulties to encounter, and prejudices to conquer: remembrances of Mrs. Pritchard's excellence in that favourite part had stamped a decisive mark on the mode of representing it; notwithstanding this, Mrs.

Abington, knowing her own particular powers of expression, would not submit to an imitation of that great actress, but exhibited the part according to her own ideas; nor did she fail of gaining great applause wherever her judgment directed her to point out the wit, sentiment, or humour of Beatrice." Of her *Charlotte* in the "*Non-Juror*," he says: "Though the part has been most excellently performed by Mrs. Oldfield, and since her time, with great applause and approbation by Mrs. Woffington and Mrs. Pritchard; yet it is impossible to conceive that more gaiety, ease, humour, elegance and grace, could have been assumed by any actress . . . her ideas of it were entirely her own, for she had seen no pattern."

Mrs. Abington continued at Drury Lane until the year 1782, when she appeared at Covent Garden for the first time, as *Lady Flutter* in "*The Discovery*."

We are told that on this occasion "her dress was simple, but perfectly characteristic; the train and petticoat were of white and silver stuff; the body and sash of a dark carmelite satin, with short white sleeves." Between the first and second acts of the play, she came forward, and was immediately saluted by a thunderous applause from every part of the theatre. When the tumult had subsided, Mrs. Abington addressed the audience in a poem in which she conveyed her gratitude for her magnificent reception, and expressed a hope that she would continue to enjoy their favour.

In February, 1786, Mrs. Abington disgraced herself by playing *Scrub* in "*The Beaux' Stratagem*." She is supposed to have acted this part for a wager, but her foolish conduct exposed her to the loudly expressed disapproval of the whole house—a thing that had never happened to her before. Nor was this all, for we find

the printed notices and criticisms of the period just as condemnatory. "Why am I obliged," writes Boaden, "to sully the fame of Abington by commemorating the utter and gross absurdity which led her to attempt the character of *Scrub* for her benefit? The metamorphosis of her person, the loss of one sex without approaching the other; the coarse but vain attempt to vulgarize her voice, which some of my readers remember to have been thin, sharp, and high-toned—all this ventured and producing nothing but disgust, I hope rendered the large receipt from the treasury itself less palatable than it had ever been upon any former occasion."

One writer burst out into verse over this sorry exhibition. He wrote:—

> "The courtly Abington's untoward star
> Wanted her reputation much to mar,
> And sink the lady to the washing tub—
> So whisper'd—'Mistress Abington, play *Scrub*.'
> To folly full as great some imp may lug her,
> And bid her sink in Fitch and Abel Druggar."

Let us hasten to add that Mrs. Abington never repeated this particular indiscretion. We can only suppose that it was due to her having taken temporary leave of her senses, an explanation that seems all the more probable when we read that owing to playing *Lady Racket* on the same night, she played the part of *Scrub* with her hair dressed for that of *Lady Racket!*

In July, 1786, Mrs. Abington paid a flying visit to Ireland. She received a sum of £500 for fifteen nights, and was overwhelmed with public marks of approval. Between 1790 and 1797 she retired from the stage, but only temporarily. Urged by her admirers to play for a charity performance at Covent Garden, she at last consented to do so, and appeared there on the 14th

June, 1797. She was next persuaded to appear once more as a regular performer. Her reception from the public when she stepped on to the stage as *Beatrice* on the 6th of October, in the same year, was wildly enthusiastic, in spite of the fact that she was undoubtedly getting on in years, although she was desirous of being thought younger than she really was. She took no formal farewell of the public, nor did she have any farewell benefit, but she made her last appearance upon any stage at Covent Garden on the 12th of April, 1799, for the benefit of her old companion, Mrs. Pope. The play chosen was Murphy's "*Three Weeks After Marriage*," in which Mrs. Abington played *Lady Racket*.

The last days of this celebrated actress were spent in card-playing and the enjoyment of the society of her fashionable friends. Like Nance Oldfield and Mrs. Cibber, Mrs. Abington was a favourite with the quality. High-born ladies consulted her upon matters of dress and fashion, and imitated her elegance of manner; men of intellect were proud to be numbered amongst her acquaintances. Dr. Johnson was a great admirer of hers. He often formed one of the brilliant circle to be found at her little supper parties. In 1775, when she was about to give her benefit performance, she begged him to come to it, a request which he had no inclination to refuse. Indeed the great man appears to have been quite vain about this actress's appeals to him for patronage. On the night in question Sir Joshua Reynolds had also promised his support, and accordingly brought a large party with him to the play. He had engaged forty seats in the front boxes to accommodate his friends, and Dr. Johnson, seated just behind them, was at such a distance from the stage

that he could neither see nor hear. He accordingly sat throughout the performance wrapped in a deep abstraction, quite oblivious to what was going on. A few nights later one of those who had been present attempted to rally the great man.

"Why, sir," said he, "did you go to Mrs. Abington's benefit? Did you see?"

"No, sir."

"Did you hear?"

"No, sir."

"Why, then, sir, did you go?"

"Because, sir, she is a favourite of the public, and when the public cares a thousandth part for you that it does for her, I will go to your benefit too."

This rejoinder was no doubt sufficiently crushing to stop all further "chaff."

In Boswell's "Life of Johnson" we find the following:—

"On Saturday, April 8th, I dined with him at Mrs. Thrale's, where we met the Irish Dr. Campbell. Johnson had supped the night before at Mrs. Abington's with some fashionable people whom he named, and he seemed much pleased with having made one in so elegant a circle. Nor did he omit to pique his mistress a little with jealousy of her housewifery; for he said with a smile, 'Mrs. Abington's jelly, my dear lady, was better than yours.'"

Horace Walpole was another admirer of Mrs. Abington's talent. He was present at the original performance at Drury Lane of Sheridan's "*The School for Scandal*," on 8th May, 1777. Two months later we find a letter of his, written to R. Jephson, Esq., in which he says: "To my great astonishment there were

MRS. ABINGTON.

more parts performed admirably in "*The School for Scandal*" than I almost ever saw in any play. Mrs. Abington was equal to the first of her profession; Yates, Parsons, Miss Pope, and Palmer all shone. It seemed a marvellous resurrection of the stage. Indeed, the play had as much merit as the actors. I have seen no comedy that comes near it since '*The Provoked Husband.*'"

Walpole altered his opinion later, as far as the merit of the play itself was concerned, for in subsequent letters, written after he had read the play, he admits that he found it to contain far less than he had anticipated. The *acting*, however, he continued to eulogize whenever this play was a topic of conversation. It was, indeed, a marvellous cast, and the play having remained on the acting list at Drury Lane for so many years, and having been revived so frequently in modern days, it is interesting to note the names of those who originally acted it to the delight of London. The cast was as follows:—

Sir Peter Teazle	King
Charles Surface	Smith
Joseph Surface	Palmer
Sir Oliver Surface	Yates
Crabtree	Parsons
Sir Benjamin Backbite	Dodd
Moses	Baddeley
Trip	Lamash
Snake	Packer
Rowley	J. Aiken
Careless	Farren
Sir Harry Bumper	Gawdrey
Lady Teazle	Mrs. Abington
Mrs. Candour	Miss Pope
Lady Sneerwell	Miss Sherry
Maria	Miss P. Hopkins

The *Lady Teazle* of Mrs. Abington was wanting in youthfulness (she was very nearly as old as King, who played *Sir Peter*), but she acted with such vivacity and charm that the unsuitability of her age to the part escaped the notice of her audience. King admired her play exceedingly; he said of her delivery that "every word stabbed." These two were inimitable when performing together. It is said that "they each lost nearly half their soul in their separation."

In 1771 Mrs. Abington paid a visit to Paris. An undated letter, probably written before she went there, shows us that Horace Walpole had already begun a correspondence with her. In it he says:—

"Mr. Walpole cannot express how much he is mortified that he cannot accept of Mrs. Abington's obliging invitation, as he had engaged company to dine with him on Sunday at Strawberry Hill, whom he would put off, if not foreigners who are leaving England. Mr. Walpole hopes, however, that this accident will not prevent an acquaintance which his admiration of Mrs. Abington's genius has made him long desire, and which he hopes to cultivate at Strawberry Hill when her leisure will give him leave to trouble her with an invitation."

Whilst in Paris she received another letter from him. It ran as follows:—

"To Mrs. Abington.

"Paris, *September 1st*, 1771.

"If I had known, Madam, of your being in Paris, before I heard it from Colonel Blaquière, I should certainly have prevented your flattering invitation, and have offered you any services that could depend upon my acquaintance here. It is plain I am old, and live

with very old folks, when I did not hear of your arrival. However, Madam, I have not that fault at least of a veteran, the thinking nothing equal to what they admired in their youth. I do impartial justice to your merit, and fairly allow it not only equal to that of any actress I have seen, but believe the present age will not be in the wrong, if they hereafter prefer it to those they may live to see.

"Your allowing me to wait on you in London, Madam, will make me some amends for the loss I have had here; and I shall take an early opportunity of assuring you how much I am, Madam, your most obliged, humble servant,

"HOR. WALPOLE."

From Strawberry Hill, on 11th June, 1780, he writes:—

"Madam,

"You may certainly always command me and my house. My common custom is to give a ticket for only four persons at a time; but it would be very insolent in me, when all laws are set at nought, to pretend to prescribe rules. At such times there is a shadow of authority in setting the laws aside by the legislature itself; and though I have no army to supply their place, I declare Mrs. Abington may march through all my dominions at the head of as large a troop as she pleases. I do not say as she can muster and command; for then I am sure my house would not hold them. The day, too, is at her own choice; and the master is her very

"Obedient humble servant,

"HOR. WALPOLE."

After all this palaver it is a little amusing to find that Walpole's ardour had in later years cooled to

such an extent that he was able to declare that Mrs. Abington could "never go beyond *Lady Teazle*, which is a second-rate character, and that rank of women are always aping women of fashion without arriving at the style." Probably when this opinion was expressed this fastidious friend of dames had been reminded by some kind friend of the days when this particular divinity had been just plain "Nosegay Fan," running wild about the streets and singing at tavern doors.

In truth it would have been difficult for any one frequenting the streets of London in the year 1776 to recognize in the elegant lady reclining in the then superlative luxury of a carriage and pair the ragged little flower-girl of the 'forties. From one of the journals of the period we learn that "Mrs. Abington is the harbinger of the reigning fashion for the season —a very beautiful style of petticoat of Persian origin is among the last importations of this admired actress." And again: "Mrs. Abington, the pattern of fashion, has fallen into the absurdity of wearing red powder: her influence on the *ton* is too well known—let her at once deviate from this unnatural French custom, or if she is determined to continue a *red head*, let her frizeur throw a little brick-dust on her arches."

On the 18th of October, 1776, the following lines, written by "a gentleman of fashion and considerable eminence in literature," appeared for the delectation of the town:—

"Scarce had our tears forgot to flow,
By Garrick's loss inspired,
When Fame, to mortalize the blow,
Said Abington's retired.

Sad with the news, Thalia mourned,
The Graces joined her train;
And nought but sighs for sighs returned
Were heard at Drury Lane.

But see! "'tis false,' in Nature's style
She comes, by fancy dressed;
Again gives Comedy her smile
And fashion all her taste."

It is hardly to be wondered at, that, in the midst of all this adulation and flattery, Mrs. Abington should have grown a little spoilt. It cannot be denied that she became very "difficult" and exacting, and, moreover, gave herself great airs. The woman of obscure origin, who by her own exertions had raised herself into the position of a leader of fashion as well as of one of the very foremost actresses of her day, might perhaps be excused for small exhibitions of vanity or pique. But unfortunately as she reached middle age she began to show great irritability of temper, which gradually developed into a taste for positive warfare. The year 1774 saw the commencement of an acrimonious correspondence between her and Garrick that continued over a long period, and in which the actress shows us how prone she was to take offence, and how she was inclined to make trouble on the slightest provocation; trouble about "benefits," trouble about the parts she was to play, trouble about anything and everything that happened to be suggested to her when she was feeling out of temper. A regular paper war was carried on between her and Garrick, who must, in dealing with the ladies of his theatre, have needed every ounce of the patience for which he was so celebrated. The correspondence is tedious, and on that account not worth quoting. Mrs. Abington had not the vivacious natural humour of a Clive, nor had she the latter's delicious orthography. Her letters read, therefore, merely as the effusions of a petulant and peevish woman, without being in the least amusing. One of them is endorsed by Garrick as follows: "The

above is a true copy of the letter, examined word by word, of that worst of bad women, Mrs. Abington." And further, with a touch of disrespect we do not find it difficult to condone: "A copy of Mother Abington's letter about leaving the stage."

Before closing this chapter, we must mention that the history of the private life of this remarkable actress contains only one incident that might arouse the condemnation of the strait-laced. To find it, we have to turn back to her early life in Ireland, when, separated from the husband with whom she failed to find happiness, she linked her life to that of a gentleman named Needham. We are told that "in order to rid herself of the crowd of admirers who daily surrounded her and, emboldened by her husband's absence, did not scruple to declare their love, and to enjoy quiet under what she called an honourable protection (since the circumstances of her position prevented her accepting any proposals of marriage), she yielded at last to the solicitations of a gentleman of family, fortune, and learning, who made the tour of Europe, and was member of Parliament for Newry in the county of Down."

Mrs. Abington seems at this time to have genuinely looked upon herself as a single woman, free to choose where she listed. Nobody appears to have thought differently, and the couple lived happily together for several years. When Mr. Needham's health broke down, Mrs. Abington accompanied him to Bath and to other places, which it was hoped might contribute to his recovery, but her devotion and attentions were in vain —the good man got worse and worse, and finally, to her great grief, passed beyond her reach. This was about the time when her engagement at Drury Lane was renewed in 1765.

Mrs. Abington lived until the 4th March, 1815. Her husband's death had occurred some nine years previously, when the large annuity she had allowed him came back to her. Mr. Needham having made suitable provision for her, and his relations having honourably seen to it that they were carried out, her last days must have been free from pecuniary anxiety, although it is said that she lost large sums by gambling at cards. She died in her apartments in Pall Mall, and was buried in St. James's Church.

CHAPTER IX

SOME STARS AND LESSER STARS

1750–1800

IT would be impossible to give within the space at our disposal an account of all the actresses whose names occur upon the play-bills of the two half-centuries dealt with in this book.

Some of these names belong to actresses who, although of the first rank, elected to remain attached to some important provincial theatre at which their reputation had been made rather than run the risk of having to take a lower place as a result of pitting themselves against the established favourites of the London stage. Others are those owned by a still more numerous class, namely those performers, more ambitious or perhaps less far-seeing, who removed themselves to London, only to find that they failed to gain the approval of managers or public, or that there was no vacancy for them in the particular line of acting in which they excelled. The names of this latter class appear and disappear with a kaleidoscopic rapidity that makes it impossible to do more than catch a glimpse of them in passing. These two classes, with but few exceptions, may be excluded as being of insufficient general interest, as may also those lesser stars who, although regularly attached to one or other of the theatres in the Metropolis and identified with certain

parts, did not, either in their public or their private lives, provide interesting material for the pen of the historian. There remain those who, either through professional excellence or private eccentricity, sometimes through both, have left a mark upon the theatrical history of their time; these will be dealt with in the present chapter, and in subsequent ones bearing the same heading.

Amongst those who retired from the stage before the end of the latter half of the eighteenth century we find the Macklins, mother and daughter, both sterling actresses in their own line. Mrs. Macklin was the widow of a respectable hosier in Dublin. After her second marriage, which was with Charles Macklin, she put herself under her husband's tuition, improved rapidly, and, chiefly owing to the immense pains he took with her, succeeded in reaching a very prominent position in her profession. When she made her début at Chester, where Macklin had taken a small theatre, she played the *Nurse* in "*Romeo and Juliet*," making a very decided hit. Indeed, her success in this part was so great that she played it for many years on the London stage.

"Old women" parts were her particular *forte*, and when she died, in 1758, she left a vacancy in that particular line which was not to be filled until the coming of Mrs. Davenport, of whom we shall hear more later. Besides the *Nurse* in "*Romeo and Juliet*," Mrs. Macklin was unrivalled in many other parts, amongst which may be mentioned *The Widow Blackacre* in "*The Plain Dealer*," *Mrs. Day* in "*The Committee*," *The Widow Lacket* in "*Oroonoko*," and *Lady Pliant* in "*The Double Dealer*." She never attempted "heroine" parts, which were unsuited to her, but

with great good sense confined herself to the line of characters in which she had made her name and in which she was in constant request. Her thorough mastery of the science of acting, her propriety in dressing her characters, her unfailing resource and adherence to the highest ideals, procured for her a position of eminence which caused many younger actresses to come to her for advice and instruction. To these she was ever ready to extend a helping hand, a fact that added not a little to her popularity, and after she was gone she was remembered for long years as having been "an affectionate wife, a fond mother, and a steadfast friend."

Miss Macklin, the pretty, modest daughter of a doting father, was talented and accomplished, but was not destined to become a star of the first magnitude. She played, however, some of the highest parts in comedy and tragedy, and had it not been for the strenuous competition existing at that time, would doubtless have left behind her a bigger reputation.

Her eminent father had staked his happiness upon her success. To gain that end he spared himself neither trouble nor expense, engaging masters for her under his own roof (for he did not approve of boarding schools for young ladies), and bestowing an almost painful attention upon her education. She learned to speak French and Italian fluently, was proficient in music and drawing, and was remarkably well-read; in fact, she became what her father had always intended her to become, a refined, polished young lady, fitted to shine in the very highest circles. Indeed, at the age of eighteen, she was considered one of the most accomplished young women in England. Macklin is said to have expended £1200 upon her education, and

as, with such a father and mother, she was practically bred to the stage, it is not surprising that she should have managed to reach a thoroughly sound, if not a brilliant, position in the profession to which her parents belonged.

Her first appearance at Covent Garden took place in 1751, when she played *Athenais* in Lee's tragedy "*Theodosius*," and met with a very favourable reception. Her next part was *Polly* in "*The Beggar's Opera*." Here, her melodious voice and musical training procured for her a decided success, a fact that must have pleased her father mightily. His pride and gratification must have been further considerably increased when she followed this satisfactory performance with that of *Lucinda* in "*The Englishman in Paris*." This character was drawn on purpose to give Miss Macklin the chance of displaying her education and accomplishments to the town, that of the dancing and music master being introduced for the same reason. Altogether, Miss Macklin was a somewhat artificial product, and it is rather wonderful that she should have gained as much of the attention of the public as she did.

Macklin seems to have bestowed a good deal of advice, warning and rebuke upon his dutiful daughter throughout her life, evidently believing that love and chastening should go hand in hand. His letters to her are marvels of fatherly benevolence mingled with reproofs that must at times have appeared crushing. In these days of "modern" daughters and submissive parents, the following extract raises a smile :—

"Pray in your writing, never write *couldn't*, *shan't*, *won't*, *wouldn't*, nor any abbreviation whatever. It is vulgar, rude, ignorant, unlettered and disrespectful:

could not, *shall not*, *etc.*, is the true writing. Nor never write *M. Macklin:* pray, who is M.? It is the highest ill-breeding ever to abbreviate *any* word, but particularly a name; besides the unintelligibility. Pray, how does this look?—'I am, Sr. yr. mt. obt. um'ble sevt.'—Mind, always write your words at length, and never make the vile apologies in your letter of being '*greatly hurried with business;*' or '*and must now conclude, as the post is this instant going out.*' Then, why did you not begin sooner? You see I am nothing with you if not critical; and so, at full length,

"I am, my dear,

"Your most affectionate,

"And anxious father,

"CHARLES MACKLIN."

Miss Macklin is described as having been both modest and gentle, and—what was even more remarkable at that time—religious. Kirkman tells us that she went oftener to her devotions than to rehearsal, and endured a good deal of green-room ridicule in consequence. It seems all the more strange, therefore, that with these quiet virtues, she should have been passionately fond of "breeches" parts. This predilection turned out in the end to be the indirect cause of her death, for, as a result of tying her garter too tightly, a large swelling appeared under the knee. Unfortunately, her modesty taking fright, she would not allow the injury to be examined by a doctor (even although her leg was by no means a stranger to the public at large!), until in the end the swelling became so serious that she was obliged to undergo a severe operation. From this she never fully recovered, her death occurring on the 3rd July, 1781, when she had

only reached the comparatively early age of forty-eight.

Another actress even more passionately attached to the wearing of "breeches" was Charlotte Charke, the half-crazy daughter of old Colley Cibber. At a very early age this extraordinary creature, whose life would provide enough material to fill half a dozen sensational novels, quarrelled with her father, who thenceforth would have nothing more to do with her. In 1730 she appeared upon the stage for the first time as *Mademoiselle* in "*The Provoked Wife*." She was very successful in this part, which, we may note in passing, was one that had been made famous in earlier days by Nance Oldfield. Shortly afterwards, Mrs. Porter having met with a carriage accident which incapacitated her from playing, Charlotte Charke took her part of *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*," and acquitted herself well. Later she appeared at the Haymarket under her brother, Theophilus Cibber. Here she performed the part of *Andromache* in "*The Distressed Mother*," and was the original *Lucy* in "*George Barnwell*." From that time she appeared chiefly in parts requiring the male attire, for which she had such a mania both on and off the stage. She used to hang about the theatres for casual hire, dressed as a man, but soon tired of a theatrical career, and the rest of her life was spent in a desperate struggle for existence, in the course of which she adopted a startling variety of professions in rapid succession. She joined a company of strolling players, purchased a puppet show, became valet to an Irish lord, who on discovering her sex promptly dismissed her, and after trying her hand at making sausages and failing to make that pay, acted the part of a waiter at the King's Head Tavern, Marylebone. After that she took

over the management of another company of strolling players and went upon the tramp once more. This very soon brought her to the verge of starvation, from which she was only rescued by the charity of her friends. Having at last permanently assumed the other sex, she for some time passed herself off as "Mr. Brown"; a rich heiress is said to have been in love with her and to have been bitterly disappointed on making the discovery that the object of her affections was a woman. The adventures of this mad creature were legion. She seems to have given a trial to every trade under the sun, and to have failed at them all, being often brought to the very lowest depths of destitution. On one occasion she was arrested for debt, and was only liberated by the aid of a subscription got up by some charitable prostitutes.

At a very early age she was separated from the Mr. Charke, a violin player, whom she married, and by whom she had one child, a little girl. According to her own account, after the death of her first husband she married a second, who extracted a promise from her that she would never reveal his name. She again became a widow, and her last days were spent almost friendless and alone, in squalor and wretchedness. She died in 1750.

In spite of her apparent madness, Charlotte Charke had undoubtedly great mental powers; had she but possessed more balance she might have gone far in the theatrical profession. Two years after her father's death she played *Marplot* in "*The Busy Body*" for her own benefit; this was in 1759. In 1755 she wrote and published a history of her life which forms heartrending reading, even though she might be said to have forfeited sympathy. This was followed by a novel for which she was only too thankful to receive £10. It was written

in a miserable hut in the fields round Islington, where she had found a temporary refuge. We are told that she wrote upon a pair of bellows in her lap by way of a desk, and that her companions were a squalid hand-maiden, a cat, a dog, a magpie and a monkey.

The story of Mrs. Robinson—"Perdita" as she was invariably called—is not so amazing as that of Charlotte Charke, but it also contains items of sensational interest. Born at Bristol on the 27th November, 1758, Mary Darby was the daughter of a captain of a whaler, who was an American by birth. He was at one time affluent, but gradually squandered the whole of his fortune upon a scheme for converting the Esquimaux Indians. No sooner had he brought his family to the verge of destitution than he took to his heels and left it to fend for itself. This desertion made it necessary for his daughter to take her share in bringing grist to the mill. She had been sent at the age of ten to a school kept by Miss Hannah More in London, and now, when only fourteen, she became a bread-winner by teaching a few pupils. Her own education was, however, not entirely neglected, for, with aforesight beyond her years, she hoarded every penny that could be spared, in order to devote it to the cultivation of accomplishments. Amongst these was that of dancing, which she learnt from the ballet-master at Covent Garden. Struck by her cleverness and beauty, her teacher soon brought her to the notice of Garrick, who took a great fancy to her, and himself trained her for the stage.

In 1776 she made a successful first appearance at Drury Lane as *Juliet*, to the *Romeo* of Brereton. Garrick, who had retired by this time, took a warm interest in his beautiful pupil's début. He frequently attended the rehearsals, and would go through the whole

part of *Romeo* himself until he was completely exhausted. That she stood very high in his estimation is certain; he was often heard to declare that her voice reminded him of Mrs. Cibber's. On the night of the performance he sat in the orchestra with his eyes glued to the stage, her wonderful reception evidently giving him the greatest pleasure and gratification. Thus, at the early age of eighteen, was the beautiful "Perdita" launched upon a stage career, which was unfortunately only too short. She was at this time already married to Thomas Robinson, a clerk in London. The marriage had taken place in 1774, and the couple had at first lived in great splendour. Her husband being, however, arrested for debt, he was thrown into the King's Bench prison, whither his wife accompanied him and remained with him throughout his confinement. Whilst there she occupied herself by completing a collection of verses, in the composition of which she had shown a precocious talent as a child; these were published in two volumes in 1775. It was owing to the total loss of her husband's property that Mary Robinson, upon his release from prison, determined finally to take to the stage for a living. She played in both comedy and tragedy, and was particularly fascinating in "breeches" parts, for which her figure was particularly suited. She was a most beautiful woman, with charm and grace that won all hearts, and a very sweet disposition that gained for her many genuine friendships. Young, talented and fascinating, it was not long before she became the recipient of many *billets-doux* from the young sparks about town, all the more on account of her unprotected condition, her husband having, soon after he regained his freedom, plunged into a life of profligacy. He lived upon his wife's earnings, and is said even to have

kept his mistresses upon them as well. "Perdita," nevertheless, refused to be separated from him, and although surrounded by every temptation to be faithless to her marriage vows, she managed for some years to maintain an unblemished reputation. Destined to fall at last, with a completeness that swept even the profession she loved away from her, this delightful woman enjoyed the admiration and respect of all who came into contact with her.

On the 3rd of December, 1779, "*The Winter's Tale*" was given "by command." Mrs. Robinson was cast for "*Perdita*" (a part, alas! that was to be her undoing), Smith for *Leontes*, Brereton for *Florizel*, and Miss Farren for *Hermione*. The King and Queen with the Royal Family were to be present, and when *Perdita* entered the green-room, exquisitely dressed and looking positively bewitching, Smith began good-naturedly to chaff her. "You will make a conquest of the Prince to-night," he cried laughingly; "I never saw you look so handsome as you do now." The words unfortunately turned out to be prophetic, for the Prince of Wales (afterwards George IV) sat leaning forward in his box throughout the performance, unable to take his eyes off the luckless *Perdita*. Everybody could see that he was completely enthralled by her delicate grace and beauty. An impassioned correspondence was the sequel to this sudden conquest. The infatuated Prince bombarded poor bewildered "Perdita" with written declarations of undying affection, invariably signing his letters "Florizel." In addition he sent her his portrait and a heart cut out in paper. On this latter token was written a double motto: "*Je ne change pas qu'en mourant*" and "*Unalterable to my 'Perdita' throughout life.*"

This ardent wooing was too much for the romantic "Perdita." She at length consented to meet the Prince, and through the good offices of the Earl of Essex, who acted as go-between, a meeting was arranged at Kew. Here, in the Gardens, by the light of the moon, the first interview took place. It was brief, for, before many moments had passed, some people came upon the scene and disturbed them; but it was long enough to plunge the heroine of this moonlit scene into an ecstasy of distracted love. Not only did she lose her heart but also her head. This is what she herself wrote about her lover: "The graces of his person, the irresistible sweetness of his smile, the tenderness of his melodious yet manly voice, will be remembered by me till every vision of this changing scene shall be forgotten." Poor "Perdita"!

There were several subsequent meetings in Kew Gardens, and not very long afterwards Mrs. Robinson made her last appearance upon the stage, as *Sir Henry Revell* in "*The Miniature Picture.*" After this a series of misfortunes dogged her footsteps. The young Prince, who was at the beginning of the attachment but eighteen years of age, proved a fickle lover. For barely two years the love which was to be so deathless kept the connection between them going, but at the end of that time disillusionment burst upon "Perdita" with even more cruelty than is usually the case. In the first fervour of possession the Prince had given his beautiful mistress a bond for £20,000, which was to be paid on his coming of age. When that day arrived, however, she received from him, not the money, but a cold note stating that they were to "meet no more." Distracted, she set off to Windsor to demand an explanation. Once more misfortune

followed her, for on the way the poor thing's coach was attacked by highwaymen on Hounslow Heath, and she was robbed of her money. Then, to crown all, when she did at last arrive at her destination, the Prince utterly refused to see her. Moreover, on meeting her in the Park a little later, he passed her by without any sign of recognition. Thus ended this disastrous love affair. "Perdita" left stranded—for she had lost a lucrative position through yielding to the Prince's entreaties, and a fair reputation into the bargain—was an object-lesson for all the world to see. She however gained more pity than reprobation, and every one rejoiced when, in 1784, three years after the desertion had taken place, Charles James Fox succeeded in obtaining for the cast-off mistress an annuity of £500.

Some friends whom she consulted having advised her not to return to the stage for fear she should not be well received by the public, Mrs. Robinson wandered over to France. At Paris she excited a good deal of interest. Marie Antoinette in particular made quite a favourite of her; she called her "*la belle Anglaise*," and presented her with a purse knitted by her own fingers.

Mrs. Robinson for some time moved backwards and forwards between France and England, finally settling down at Brighton in 1787. Cut off from the stage, she took to her pen and wrote quite passable poems and novels. In 1799 she undertook the poetical department of the "Morning Post," but before very long, on 26th December, 1800, death intervened and put an end to her labours.

"Perdita" flits across the pages of history a pathetic figure. Loving, devoted, tender-hearted, she

was one of those people fated to get into wrong hands. The protection of a wretchedly unreliable father was exchanged for that of a profligate husband, from whose clutches she escaped only to fall into the hands of a faithless lover. "Poor 'Perdita'!" sighed Mrs. Siddons, "I pity her with all my heart." That seems to have expressed the almost universal sentiment of the world at large. Even Hannah More could not judge her harshly, whilst the comment of the cynical Walpole when "Perdita" was once under discussion was: "I make the greatest allowance for inexperience and novel passions."

"It is impossible to say," says Genest, "what would have been the result of her coming on the stage again, but mostly no good reason can be assigned why she should not have been received according to theatrical merit." As *Perdita* Mrs. Robinson was exquisitely touching, and the general opinion seems to have been that had she remained upon the stage the early promise she showed would have placed her at least amongst those in the very front rank.

There are two portraits of her in the Wallace Collection—one by Gainsborough and the other by Reynolds. She seems to have had something about her that was inspiring, for she was also painted by Hoppner, Cosway, and Romney, whilst poets raved about her in verse and the periodicals of her day glorified her in prose.

Mrs. Fitzhenry was an actress better known in Dublin than in London. Born somewhere about 1728, she was the daughter of an Irish publican named Flanigan. Among the gentlemen who occasionally lodged there was one Captain Gregory, who fell in love with Miss Flanigan and married her. Not very

long afterwards he was drowned, and, her father happening to die about the same time, Mrs. Gregory turned her thoughts to the stage. Being ambitious to appear in London, she consulted a friend of hers, a certain Mr. Sparks, as to the best means of bringing this about. Mr. Sparks, in a letter to her from London, advised her to procure the opinion of some good judge in Dublin as to whether she had sufficient talent to warrant the hazardous experiment of leaving her native country to apply for an engagement upon the London stage. Victor tells us how this advice was followed. To his annoyance, he himself was chosen to act as judge, an honour which he at first bluntly declined. His experience of stage-struck young ladies who mistake inclination for talent was a wide one, and he had no desire to add one more to the already long list of candidates disappointed of his recommendation. It was much against his will, therefore, that he was at last persuaded to hear Mrs. Gregory rehearse. Hating the job heartily, he turned up at rehearsal with his disinclination so plainly written upon his face that the poor woman must have found it an agony to proceed. Hardly had she recited three or four speeches, however, than he sprang to his feet and exclaimed excitedly: "Madam, the best apology I can make you for what I have already said is by this early declaration of my opinion that you have it in your power to be an actress of consequence; now, madam, proceed as long as you please, I shall attend with pleasure."

The upshot of all this was that Victor wrote a wildly enthusiastic letter to Mr. Sparks, who passed it on to Covent Garden. The new aspirant for fame was promptly invited to come over to that theatre, and on the 10th of January, 1754, she made her début there as

Hermione in the "*Distressed Mother.*" She afterwards performed *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore,*" but her strong brogue marred the effect of her acting to such an extent that she failed to gain approval. As a result of this failure she immediately returned to Ireland, where Sowdon was persuaded by Victor to engage her to play the first parts with Barry, at a salary of £300 for the season. She again chose the part of *Hermione* for her first appearance, and succeeded so admirably that her popularity in Dublin became assured. The following season—that of 1755-6—she remained in Dublin, where she was a great favourite, but her marked improvement secured her another trial at Covent Garden in 1757. This time her reception was all that could be desired, her *Calista* and *Hermione* being notable successes.

About this time she married Mr. Fitzhenry, and her next appearances, which were in Dublin in the season of 1757-8, were made under the name of Mrs. Fitzhenry. She remained in Ireland until the season of 1765-6, when she made a most unfortunate début upon the boards at Drury Lane in the part of *Roxana.* She had been invited there to put a curb upon Mrs. Yates, who was giving Garrick a good deal of trouble. That lady, suspecting the truth, appealed to her friends for support, with the result that Mrs. Fitzhenry met with a very bad reception, being almost hissed off the stage. Moreover, on returning to Ireland immediately afterwards she found that the news of this fiasco had preceded her, and that she was in danger of being neglected altogether. She managed to live down this temporary loss of popularity, however, and continued for many years to charm the public in her own country. When her second husband died, a few years after mar-

riage, Mrs. Fitzhenry was left with two children. She had amassed a considerable fortune by her exertions, and when she retired from the stage, somewhere about 1774, she settled down at Bath, where she died in 1790.

Miss Nossiter, who, together with Barry, was engaged by Sowdon at Smock Alley during Mrs. Gregory's first season at that theatre, was a young actress who did not realize her early promise. She made her first appearance at Covent Garden on 10th October, 1753, when she played *Juliet* to the *Romeo* of Barry. She was not much more than the age of *Juliet* at the time, and had the advantage of being really in love with her *Romeo*, a fact that was well known. Mrs. Cibber having left Covent Garden to return to Drury Lane, Miss Nossiter had been imported to supply *Juliet* in her stead. She, however, failed to come up to expectations in the part, in spite of the advantages mentioned above, although she certainly showed great sensibility, had a graceful figure, and was remarkably intelligent. Tate Wilkinson describes her thus:—"She threw strokes in many passages that were not only genuine but forcible, and bade fair in time to supply the place of Cibber; but notwithstanding the advantages of youth, and meeting wonderful encouragement, Nature had not endowed her with voice and powers sufficient for the arduous task to stand against her rival, and they appeared weakened the more she was seen instead of gaining ground. Indeed, I never saw her play as well as the first season; neither was her voice musical, and her mouth remarkably wide, but she drew to all her characters. She acted *Juliet* a number of nights. Her second part was *Belvidera*, and in the mad scene did

wonders from tuition, attention, and strong understanding."

We are told that when Barry and Miss Nossiter played *Pyrocles* and *Philoclea* in the tragedy "*Philoclea*," the whole house "sighed like a furnace." In the season 1754–5 they both went over to Dublin, Barry having insisted upon a salary for the two of them of £1300 for the season, and the next year they returned to London. There is not much more to record of Miss Nossiter except that she gradually pined away, most people thought out of love for Barry, and that when she died she left him £3000.

CHAPTER X

SOME STARS AND LESSER STARS—*continued*

(1750-1800)

MRS. HAMILTON, whose first husband's name was Bland, was a good sound actress who enjoyed considerable popularity. In the season of 1745-6 and in the following summer she played unimportant parts at Covent Garden. In 1748 she went over to Dublin, and, although very ignorant, managed by hard work and perseverance to improve rapidly in her profession. Indeed, she was so much appreciated by the Dublin audiences that Sheridan, in 1751, thought it almost superfluous to engage Mrs. Woffington. Mrs. Bland, who was by this time a widow, played *Hermione* to Peg Woffington's *Andromache*, and *Lady Lurewell* to her *Sir Harry Wildair*. Finding herself, however, thrust into the background by the superiority of Woffington, she left Ireland in September, 1752, and returned to Rich at Covent Garden.

Tate Wilkinson describes her thus: "Her person was rather of the *en bonne point*, but tall, and a good set of features, but by no means elegant; she possessed what was all sublime and precious to Mr. Rich—a fine head of jetty black flowing locks. That commander-in-chief did not like powder, but wished a prohibitory act to that article of feminine luxury, unless, perchance, his favourite fair turned grey; so in

compliance to her general's taste, she seldom or never wore powder."

During the season of 1752 Mrs. Bland was the most important actress, with the exception of Mrs. Cibber, at Covent Garden. She played *Jane Shore* and *Hermione* to Mrs. Cibber's *Alicia* and *Andromache*, and *Lady Townly* to Barry's *Lord Townly*. In 1753 the absence of Peg Woffington brought her a piece of good fortune; she was given the part of *Queen Elizabeth* to originate in Jones's "*Earl of Essex*." The play was a great success, and had a run of sixteen nights, Mrs. Bland making a decided hit as *The Queen*. The year following she became Mrs. Hamilton.

In spite of the acquisition to Covent Garden of George Anne Bellamy and Miss Nossiter in that year (1754), Mrs. Hamilton remained the great stand-by of the management. She played during the season *Millamant*, *Portia*, *Sylvia*, and, in fact, in three plays out of every four. Woffington's return, however, in 1754, once more challenged her position, and finally wrested it from her, although not without a struggle. Mrs. Hamilton's familiarity with the public was at first greatly in her favour. She was, however, gradually driven to relinquishing *Lady Townly*, *Portia*, and several other principal characters to her rival, whom she must have cordially detested. The next two seasons Mrs. Hamilton had a desperate fight for it, but she succeeded fairly well in holding her own, until the sudden illness and retirement of Peg Woffington in the spring of 1757 gave her a better chance. From that time until 1760, when her old friend Rich died, she received a yearly increase of salary.

Mrs. Hamilton, during these years of popularity, always wore her hair unpowdered, in which particular

she differed from most of her contemporaries. This gave her a certain distinction, and was responsible for some of the admiration she excited. She was not wanting in good nature so long as her powers as an actress were not questioned; when this was the case she was in the habit of giving vent to an exceedingly hot temper, her want of control embroiling her in many green-room quarrels. It was unfortunate that she became spoiled by her success and began to give herself airs, as this was at the bottom of all the troubles in which she became involved after the death of Rich, who was succeeded in the management of Covent Garden by Messrs. Beard and Bencraft.

Before long, Mrs. Hamilton, who continued under the new management, began to show a quarrelsomeness and petulance that was exceedingly annoying. Her new masters soon began to regard her as a nuisance, and would gladly have got rid of her had they not been bound, as they thought, to carry out the contract entered into by Rich. When "*The Lady's Last Stake*" was to be revived, she was allotted the part of *Lady Wronglove*. She, however, had made up her mind to play *Lady Conquest*, although her age made her unsuitable for that character. Upon her flatly refusing to play *Lady Wronglove*, Beard threatened to fine her £20 if she remained obdurate. A violent quarrel resulted, and Mrs. Hamilton, in her rage, unfortunately blurted out the fact that, by a secret article in her agreement with Rich, she was not obliged to continue her contract with any other manager but himself. Instead of shivering in his shoes at the bare idea of losing her, as she had fondly imagined would be the case, Beard was only too delighted at the prospect of being able to get rid of

such a tiresome member of his company, and he thereupon promptly turned her out, a result quite different to the one the lady had expected.

After her dismissal from Covent Garden, Mrs. Hamilton still remained obsessed by the notion that she was indispensable and would shortly be recalled. In order to remain within reach, she accepted an engagement at Bath. She was evidently not cured of her quarrelsomeness, for whilst there "*The Provoked Husband*" having been announced, she claimed the part of *Lady Townly*, although Mrs. Lee had been advertised for that part in the bills. Neither actress would give way, and at the close of *Lord Townly's* soliloquy, *both* actresses entered simultaneously as *Lady Townly!*

During Mrs. Hamilton's stay at Bath, her husband died in London. He had not treated her very well, but, nevertheless, upon hearing the sad news, she hurried back to London dressed in the habiliments of deepest woe, and prepared to make a suitable display of sorrow. It did not take long, however, for her grief to turn to bitter annoyance, for on reaching her destination she discovered that the £2000 which represented her savings, and which she had entrusted to him, had been dissipated, and that she was left absolutely penniless at a time when old age was creeping rapidly upon her.

The rest of her history makes pitiful reading. Mr. Beard refused to reinstate her at Covent Garden, whilst at Drury Lane she had no chance, owing to the popularity of Mrs. Pritchard, Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Clive, and Mrs. Cibber. There was nothing for it but to apply to Mossop, in Dublin. Remembering her fame seventeen years before, Mossop offered her a

handsome salary, which she eagerly accepted. The Dublin audiences now failed to appreciate her, however, and would not tolerate her in any part but that of *Mrs. Peachum*. Finding herself positively disliked at last, with old age coming on fast and with friends gone, the former favourite drifted into the Irish provinces.

Poor Mrs. Hamilton's foolishness was even yet not at an end. On one of her journeys she made the acquaintance of a swaggering captain named Sweeny. He was only twenty-five years of age, but being under the impression that the middle-aged widow was very wealthy, he laid siege to her affections and persuaded her to marry him. Being only on half-pay, he was free to follow her from place to place, which he did most assiduously, pawning her clothes and trinkets as he went. Misery following upon misery, she wandered over to Edinburgh, where she was a failure. In 1771 Wilkinson found her at Malton in Yorkshire playing the *Nurse* in "*Romeo and Juliet*." Taking pity upon her forlorn condition, he engaged her for the York theatre. At this point her fortunes took a slight turn for the better. For one thing, her dreadful husband, no doubt convinced that nothing more was to be got out of her, relaxed his hold and took himself off. For another, her performances of *Queen Elizabeth* and *Mrs. Heidelberg* were really successful, and in consequence she seemed to be on a fair road to regaining her former status. This better fortune was, however, of short duration. One night, in the middle of one of her performances, her false teeth, worn out with long service, suddenly gave way. In vain did she retire in confusion in order to remedy the disaster; those untrustworthy servants refused to be coerced into submission, and their poor owner was forced to come

back and mumble through the rest of her part as best she could. This proved to be the crowning misfortune in her career. Although she was presented with a fresh set, she failed to obtain another engagement on her return to London, whereupon she fell into great distress, and was only kept from absolute ruin through the charity of the other actors and actresses. She finally became wardrobe-keeper at Richmond theatre, but ended her days in poverty and misery.

The terrible example of Mrs. Hamilton's decay and wretched ending was the origin of the establishment of the Theatrical Fund, but, although she was the occasion of its foundation, she did not benefit from it, as she had at that time no engagement at either of the London theatres.

Mrs. Green, the original *Mrs. Malaprop*, was a comic actress of the very first rank. Her public career began in 1730, but she did not arrive at Covent Garden from Dublin until 1754, when she played *Lappet*. She was the daughter of Hippisley, and the sister of Governor Hippisley. Had she not had the misfortune to live at the same time as Mrs. Clive she would have ranked as the very first of abigails and chambermaids.

Another excellent actress of comic characters was Mrs. Willis, who made so much of the part of *The Old Lady* in "*Henry VIII*" that she was always in request whenever that play was given and she was available. Her latter years being spent in the direst poverty, a subscription amongst the players was started for her benefit. An amusing story is told of how, upon her applying to Theophilus Cibber for a contribution, that gentleman, who was then very young and always very wild, refused her application, making the

excuse that his family was very large. "Oh, dear Sir," cried Mrs. Willis, "how can that be? You have neither wife nor child." "It may be so," replied Theophilus, "but I have a large family of vices, Madam!" Mrs. Willis lived to a very great age, as did a contemporary of hers, Mrs. Elmy, the latter a very good actress of great distinction. Chetwood, in 1749, wrote: "Mrs. Elmy had more spirits in a private room than on the stage; but there, she meant well." When Tate Wilkinson was very young, Mrs. Elmy, knowing his inclination for the stage, gave him lessons in elocution. He always declared himself grateful to her for correcting many of his faults, nor did he ever forget her excellent lessons in pronunciation, manners, and characters. Her *Octavia*, *Lady Grace*, and *The Lady* in "*Comus*" were her most successful performances. Her name does not occur in the Covent Garden bills after the season 1761–2, but she lived to see the beginning of the new century.

Mrs. Ward was a niece of Mrs. Hamilton's. She is described as having been "not handsome but well-made." Although the original *Lady Randolph* when Home's tragedy appeared in Edinburgh, she was little more than a tolerable actress. Quin christened her the "half-baked pancake," a name that stuck to her throughout her career. She was used as a stopgap when other talent failed, and must have been a somewhat exasperating person. Once, when Garrick was pouring forth Nathaniel Rowe's impassioned poetry, he found that Mrs. Ward was calmly tying up her glove knot in full view of the audience, without paying the slightest attention to what he was saying!

Miss Barsanti, whose English playing ended in 1777, after which date she acted only in Dublin, is

notable as having been the original *Lydia Languish.* Her peculiarity lay in her intense dislike of appearing in "breeches" parts, wherein she was the opposite of Miss Macklin, and many others of her day. She was once cast for *Signor Arionelli* in "*The Son-in-Law.*" The time of the play is 1779, but nevertheless the actress assumed the Oriental costume of a pre-Christian, that of Arbaces in Artaxerxes, so determined was she not to appear in male attire. The family of Mr. Lisley, to whom she was first married, refused to allow her to appear as Mrs. Lisley on the bills, so that she continued to play under the name of Miss Barsanti. At her second marriage, however, she became Mrs. Daly, and appears in the theatrical dictionaries under that name. She was excellent in all Mrs. Abington's parts, her *Estifania*, *Mrs. Oakley*, *Lady Fanciful*, and *Lady Townly* being considered her most successful efforts.

Three years later came the retirement of Mrs. Hartley, "the most perfect beauty that ever was seen." She was one of Garrick's tragedy ladies, and was given the part of *Elfrida* in Mason's tragedy of that name. Her claim to be remembered by posterity, as far as her acting is concerned, rests chiefly on her success in this part. Walpole wrote: "Mrs. Hartley is made for the part, if beauty and figure would suffice for what you write; but she has no one symptom of genius. Still, it is very affecting, and does admirably for the stage, under all these disadvantages. The tears came into my eyes, and streamed down the Duchess of Richmond's lovely cheeks."

Her beauty was indisputable, whatever critics may have thought of her acting. She was a favourite subject for the brush of Sir Joshua Reynolds, and a

full-length portrait of her hangs in the Garrick Club. We cannot describe her better than by quoting a letter written by Moody to Garrick, when he first found her at Bath. This was in 1772, when Moody was prowling about in search of fresh talent for Drury Lane. He wrote: "Mrs. Hartley is a good figure, with a handsome, small face, and very much freckled: her hair red, and her neck and shoulders well turned. There is not the least harmony in her voice; but when forced (which she never fails to do on every occasion) is loud and strong, but such an inarticulate gabble that you must be well acquainted with her part to understand her. She is ignorant and stubborn: the latter must be got the better of at Drury Lane, and the former mended; but I despair of either at Covent Garden, where she is engaged: notwithstanding, there is a superficial glare about her that may carry her through a few nights; but be assured she cannot last long. She has a husband, a precious fool, that she heartily despises. She talks lusciously, and has a slovenly good-nature about her that renders her prodigiously vulgar."

Mrs. Hartley retired from the stage in 1780 after a short career of eight years. She was then only thirty years of age, so her success cannot have been greater than Moody predicted. She lived, however, until 1824.

Anne Catley, who retired in 1784, was an actress and singer of great celebrity. She was an odd creature, whose eccentricities formed the basis of many a good story of that day. She was born in London in 1745, and made her first appearance in public at Vauxhall in the summer of 1762. In the autumn of the same year she made her début at Covent Garden in

the character of the *Pastoral Nymph* in "*Comus*." At this period she was remarkable for little more than the beauty of her person. O'Keefe describes her as follows: "She was one of the most beautiful women I ever saw; the expression of her eyes and the smiles and dimples that played round her lip and cheeks were enchanting; she was eccentric, but had an excellent heart."

In 1763 Miss Catley blossomed forth into notoriety on account of a lawsuit brought by her father (a publican at Norwood) against her music-master, Bates, Sir Francis Delaval, and an attorney named Fraine. Anne, be it understood, had been apprenticed to Bates, and was not yet free from her articles. She and Bates did not hit it off at all. They were for ever quarrelling, Bates on one occasion being so incensed with the girl that he threatened to turn her out of doors. When, therefore, Sir Francis Delaval, who was infatuated with Anne's beauty, came along and offered Bates £200 and another like sum on top of it to hand the girl over to him, the temptation was too great to be resisted. Bates accepted the offer, the attorney was called in to draw up a document that freed Anne from her indentures, and she and her mother were removed to lodgings provided by Sir Francis. The girl openly became the latter's mistress, was waited upon by his servants, and rode out with him every day. Now Mr. Catley lived with a Quaker named Barclay, who, shocked at the spectacle of this shameless transfer, persuaded the bewildered father to bring a case in the Court of the King's Bench. Two motions were made —one for a Habeas Corpus, directing Sir Francis Delaval to bring the body of Anne Catley into Court; and the second was for a rule to show cause why an

information should not be filed against Sir Francis Delaval, Bates and Fraine, the attorney, for a conspiracy to prostitute Anne Catley under the forms of law.

On the following day accordingly, Anne Catley was produced in Court accompanied by Sir Francis, and was there discharged out of his custody. On the young lady's release, her father attempted to remove her by force. When he took her by the arm, however, she resisted so violently that Sir Francis's counsel appealed to the Court to restrain the father's coercion. The poor man was severely reprimanded, the Lord Chief Justice pointing out that although under age she had attained years of discretion. Anne was then asked whether she would sooner return with her father or go with Sir Francis. Without a moment's hesitation the little minx put her arm under that of Sir Francis, and, declaring that she loved him too much to think of leaving him, made a deep curtsey to the Judge and another to the Bar, and walked out of Westminster Hall to Sir Francis's carriage. There was a trial subsequently to dispose of the second motion, and the three defendants were in the end heavily fined, the whole cost, of course, being borne by Sir Francis.

After this adventure Anne Catley sang at Marylebone Gardens, where she became a prime favourite. Not only was she extremely popular, but her eccentricities provided a never-ending topic of diverting conversation. O'Keefe tells us how the first time he ventured to enter a theatre after the failure of his "*Banditti*," Miss Catley, who was in a front row of the lower boxes, shouted to him in a voice loud enough to be heard all over the theatre, "So, O'Keefe, you had a piece damned the other night; I'm glad of it;

the devil mend you for writing an opera without bringing me into it!" A few minutes after she had uttered this sally, Leoni entered the box with a lady leaning upon his arm. The irrepressible Catley, catching his eye, at once called out: "How do you do, Leoni? I hear you are married; is that your wife? Bid her stand up till I see her." Leoni, abashed, whispered to the lady, who with good-humoured compliance stood up. Catley, after looking her up and down for a moment or two, burst out: "Ha! very well indeed! I like your choice."

In 1763 Anne Catley was invited over to Dublin by Mossop. She arrived late in December, and made her first appearance as *Polly Peachum*. Thenceforth she became the rage in Dublin. She had admirers by the score, dressed magnificently and became so fashionable that a new word was coined; to be "Catleyfied" meant to be dressed in the very height of smartness. Her beauty and vivacity enabled her to take great liberties with her audiences, but no one seemed to mind her oddities. When she was *encored* she would frequently turn round and curtsey with her back to the audience! On one occasion an orange having been thrown at her from the gallery, she picked it up, and advancing to the footlights exclaimed: "This is not a civil (Seville) orange." This was smart, but it must be confessed the same story has been told of both Quin and Mrs. Clive.

Miss Catley, in spite of her rather childish peculiarities, was a very talented actress. Her *Euphrosyne* was a tremendous success, as also her *Polly*, *Dorcas*, *Rosetta*, and *Deborah Woodcock*. She proved a veritable gold-mine to the Smock Alley Theatre until 1770, by which time she had become less of an attraction.

Returning to Covent Garden her last performance took place in 1784. She died in the house of a certain General Lascelles, at Brentford, in 1789. She was said to have been married to this "excellent and worthy general," and as one authority speaks of her as "the good mother, the chaste wife, and accomplished woman," she probably had some children by him.

Mrs. Baddeley, who made her last appearance on any stage in 1784 at Edinburgh, where she had taken refuge from her creditors, is less remembered as an actress than as a beautiful and depraved woman. Born in 1745, she was the daughter of a Mr. Snow, sergeant-trumpeter to King George II. She was well educated, and having a melodious voice, was trained as a vocalist. When only eighteen years of age she eloped with Baddeley the actor, and soon after made her début at Drury Lane as *Ophelia*. Subsequently she became a favourite at Vauxhall and Ranelagh, where her voice earned her twelve guineas a week. At the theatre her line was "genteel comedy," and once, owing to the illness of Mrs. Barry, she performed the part of *Mrs. Beverley* in "*The Gamester*." The King was so enchanted with her performance of *Fanny* in "*The Clandestine Marriage*," that he had her portrait painted by Zoffany.

It was not long before Mrs. Baddeley was separated from her husband; her *amours* were notorious even before this event took place. On one occasion a duel, fortunately a bloodless one, was the outcome of her propensity for philandering. The two principals were Baddeley and David Garrick's brother George, whom the lady loved to distraction. The parties went out into Hyde Park on a November morning in 1770. Baddeley, it is said, had been egged on to fight

George Garrick by a Jewish friend, who was himself in love with Mrs. Baddeley, and was accordingly eager for the husband to shoot his rival! He was, however, destined to disappointment. The two combatants, pale with fright, fired anywhere rather than at each other, and would have gone on doing so indefinitely had not the cause of all the trouble rushed in and screamed "Spare him!" without indicating anybody in particular. Each gentleman took the appeal as addressed to him, and husband and friend taking the lady by the arm, the whole party adjourned to dinner. The married couple soon afterwards played together in "*It's Well It's No Worse!*"

The separation, however, soon followed, Mrs. Baddeley from that time going rapidly from bad to worse. Her house was luxuriously furnished *á la Du Barry*, everything about her establishment being of the most splendid kind. She kept nine servants, and her liveries were gorgeous to behold. Needless to say that all this was not paid for out of her salary. Her affairs were mostly mercenary, although she is said in one case to have swallowed poison as the result of a lover's desertion. A visit to Paris only increased her depravity and hastened her headlong career downwards. On her return she managed to secure a few country engagements, but embarrassments soon crowded thick upon her. She lost favour with the public, fell into debt, was rescued by public subscription, relapsed into further destitution, and finally took to laudanum and cognac. She was often so much under the influence of the former when on the stage that she was unable to go on with her part, and paralysis putting the final touch to this picture of degradation, death mercifully came to her aid in 1786.

Mrs. Beresford, who left the London stage for that of Edinburgh in 1789, was a good actress, of whom there is not much to be noted, except that she was Goldsmith's *Miss Richland* and *Miss Hardcastle* and Sheridan's *Julia* in "*The Rivals*."

The same year (1789) saw the retirement of Mrs. Inchbald, novelist, playwright, and actress. She was born on the 15th October, 1753, at Standingfield, near Bury St. Edmunds, in Suffolk. Her father, who was a farmer named John Simpson, died in 1761, leaving a widow and a numerous family. The girls were celebrated for their beauty, especially Elizabeth, and they seem to have acquired literary tastes at an early age, in spite of the absence of any regular schooling.

Ambitious to become an actress, Elizabeth, in defiance of the disapproval of her family, left home secretly and came to London. This was in 1772, and in the same year she married Joseph Inchbald, an actor. She accompanied him to Bristol, and there played *Cordelia* to his *Lear* on the 4th September, 1772. She had, however, an impediment in her speech, which was sufficient to prevent her from ever becoming a really efficient actress. This imperfection she took the greatest pains to overcome. It was a standing source of mortification to her, although in private life it was considered to enhance her charm.

For several years she continued to play with her husband in the provinces, her rôles including *Jane Shore*, *Calista*, *Desdemona*, *Aspasia* in "*Tamerlane*," *Juliet*, *Imogen*, and others too numerous to mention. She was very lovely, and personally extremely popular, but the unfortunate defect in her speech kept her out of the front rank, and when she appeared for the first time at Covent Garden in 1780 as *Beliaro* in "*Phil-*

aster," she met with only a moderate reception. Her contract included "walking on" in pantomimes, a thing for which she had a positive horror, and her salary was only £3 a week, which was less than she had received in the provinces. In 1782 she engaged with Daly in Dublin at a salary of £5, and achieved a tolerable success, subsequently returning to London and obtaining an engagement. Here she had once more to appear in pantomimes as part of her contract, but relief came in 1784, when the success of her farce, "*The Mogul's Tale*," produced by Colman at the Haymarket, set her thoughts away from the stage in a direction which in the end brought her the fame she longed for. This play was followed by many others. Altogether she adapted or wrote nineteen plays, some of which were for a time successful. Her success as a dramatist led her to retire from the stage altogether in 1789.

Although her career upon the stage cannot be described as having been a brilliant one, Mrs. Inchbald's name occurs so frequently in the theatrical biographies of her day, that a few additional facts about her may with propriety find a place here. Her beauty was the subject of many panegyrics, and seems to have been of the ethereal, intellectual type. Boaden describes her thus: "Tall, slender, straight; of the purest complexion and most beautiful features; her hair of a golden auburn, her eyes full at once of spirit and sweetness; a combination of delicacy that checked presumption, and *interest* that captivated the fancy." Fanny Kemble, in her "Records of a Girlhood," tells us that Mrs. Inchbald had "a singular uprightness and unworldliness, and a child-like directness and simplicity of manner, which, combined with her

personal loveliness and halting, broken utterance, gave to her conversation, which was both humorous and witty, a most peculiar and comical charm." The same writer gives some amusing anecdotes in connection with Mrs. Inchbald's celebrated stammer. Once, after travelling all day in a pouring rain, she was preparing to alight from her coach at the door of an inn. The coachman, all dripping wet, politely offered her his arm in order to assist her. "Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Mrs. Inchbald, to the amusement of the bystanders. "Y-Y-Y-You will give me m-m-m-my death of c-c-c-cold; do bring me a-a-a-a *dry* man!" On another occasion, an aristocratic neighbour of hers, overtaking her walking along the road one very hot day, asked her to allow him to give her a lift home in his carriage. Mrs. Inchbald hastened to decline his offer, explaining that she had just come from the market-gardener's. "And, my lord," added she, "I-I-I have my pocket f-f-full of onions." The best story of all, however, is the following: At the first reading of one of her plays, a certain young lady with a lean lanky figure was proposed to her for the part of the heroine. Mrs. Inchbald was indignant. "No, no, no!" she stammered; "I-I-I-I won't have that s-s-s-stick of a girl! D-d-d-do give me a-a-a-a girl with *bumps!*"

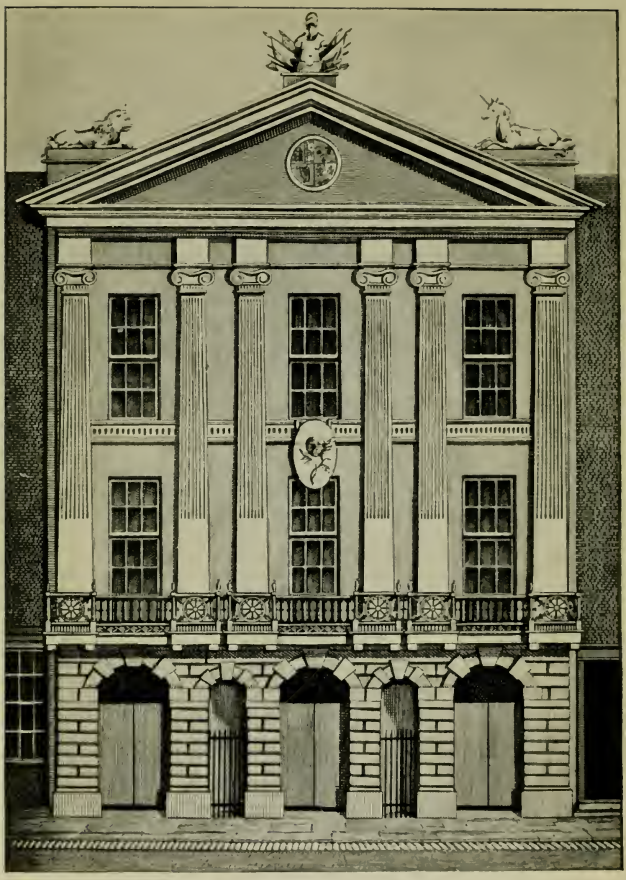
Mrs. Inchbald throughout life maintained a disposition towards "larkiness." In her "Journal" we find an entry made when she had reached the mature age of thirty-five. "On the 29th June (Sunday)," she writes, "dined, drank tea, and supped with Mrs. Whitfield. At *dark*, she and I and her son William walked out. I rapped at doors in New Street and King Street and *ran away*." Altogether, the impression left upon the mind after reading Boaden's compilation of

her memoirs and the account of her given by her friends and contemporaries, is that of a strong personality, full of charm, lovable and picturesque.

Her intimacy with Mrs. Siddons, and, indeed, with all the Kemble family, always strong, became even more so after the death of Mr. Inchbald in 1779. John Kemble was her particular friend. She was an enthusiastic admirer of his, and the hero of her captivating novel "A Simple Story," published in 1791, was supposed to have been intended as a portrait of him. At one period of their intimacy it was certainly expected that Kemble would end by asking the young widow to become his wife. That she herself had hopes of this cannot be doubted after reading her memoirs. On one occasion, when she and Miss Mellon (afterwards Duchess of St. Albans) were chatting together in the green-room and laughingly discussing their male acquaintances from a matrimonial point of view, Kemble, who had been overhearing a large part of the conversation, jokingly said to Mrs. Inchbald: "Well, Mrs. Inchbald, would you have had me?" The beautiful actress turned a smiling face upon him and stammered out with hearty emphasis: "Dear heart! I'd have j-j-j-jumped at you!" And in the opinion of everybody there was no doubt that she would.

In view of her considerable literary earnings, it is surprising that Mrs. Inchbald should have practised a lifelong frugality. She was, on the other hand, extraordinarily liberal to her sisters, and little has been written of her that is not to her credit. She died at Kensington House on the 1st August, 1821. There is a portrait of her painted by Sir Thomas Lawrence.

Three well-known actresses retired during the year 1792. These were Mrs. Merry, Mrs. Pitt, and Mrs.



THE OLD THEATRE, DRURY LANE.

(This front, which stood in Bridges Street, was built by order of Garrick.)

Wells. The first-named came up to Covent Garden from the Bath Theatre in the season of 1785–6. She was at that time Miss Elizabeth Brunton. During her first season she was expected to prove a successor to Mrs. Siddons, but her powers were found to have been over-rated. She was, however, a capable actress, and had a certain amount of fire and imagination. She was, apparently, plain of feature, but possessed a melodious voice. At Covent Garden she played the *Grecian Daughter*, *Juliet*, *Monimia*, *Calista*, and the usual repertoire of classic heroines, and proved to be a useful actress, though somewhat disappointing. She continued playing there until 1792, when having, in the previous year, married a Mr. Merry and played for one season under her married name, she withdrew from the London stage and went to America. There she blossomed out into a star of the first magnitude, and having in 1798 lost her first husband, married Warren, the Philadelphia and Baltimore manager. In another place we shall give an account of her younger sister Louisa, who played comedy at Covent Garden between 1803 and 1807, when she became Countess of Craven. There was another Miss Elizabeth Brunton, whose career extended from 1815 to 1849. This third Miss Brunton became the second wife of the actor Yates. Mrs. Pitt was a very good actress in her line, *The Nurse* in "*Romeo and Juliet*," *The Landlady* in "*The Chances*," *The Hostess* in "*Henry V*," etc. etc., falling naturally to her share. Genest gives a long list of the characters she played in London over a long period extending from 1748 to 1785, which shows that she must have been an excellent actress. She was the original *Mrs. Croaker* in "*The Good-Natured Man*," and *Lady Sycamore* in "*The Maid of the Mill*." Her *Dorcas* in

"*Cymon*," and her *Mrs. Loveit* in "*The Man of Mode*," were among her best characters. Mrs. Wells, although a very good actress in parts such as *Mrs. Cadwallader*, *Cowslip*, *Bridget*, etc., was chiefly famous for her imitations. She used to represent "*A Scene from Two Great Tragic Actresses*," namely, Mrs. Siddons and Mrs. Crawford,[1] in which she delighted everybody except the two ladies in question. She was the original *Cowslip* in "*The Agreeable Surprise*." She was rather a scapegrace I am afraid, being noted for a "leering smile," which some persons, it may be presumed of the male sex, found captivating. Both Miss Farren and Mrs. Siddons refused to play if she were given the secondary parts. She played at all three London theatres from 1781–92, after which date she only returned to the stage under her married name of Sumbel, to give her *Imitations*. Palmer, at Bath, paid her as much as £50 a night to give these, although we are told that they were inferior to those of that brilliant amateur Simons.

Mrs. Webb died in 1793. She was a good actress whose London stage career began in 1778 and ended with her death. She originated quite a number of unimportant characters, and was one of the *Mrs. Peachums*, *Mrs. Honeycombes*, etc., of the stage.

Mrs. Esten's retirement came during the same season, namely in 1794. She was an extraordinarily pretty woman and a capital actress. She made her first appearance upon the stage, at Bristol, in June, 1786. In 1790 she was engaged under Jackson in Edinburgh, where she was very popular. Jackson was sorry to lose her, but an offer from Harris at Covent Garden was not to be resisted, and she appeared there for the

[1] Anne Barry.

season of 1790–1, remaining at the same theatre until her retirement four years later. She played *Rosalind*, *Indiana*, *Roxalana*, *Belvidera*, *Monimia*, etc. etc., her beauty and talent making her very popular.

This half-century saw the retirement of one more actress of note, namely that of Elizabeth Younge, who became the first wife of Pope the actor. She was a tragedy actress of all but the very first rank; had it not been for the arrival of Mrs. Siddons she would, as the natural successor to Mrs. Yates and Mrs. Crawford, have reigned supreme. The author of the "Theatrical Biography," in 1772, says:—"Miss Younge has not long been upon the stage, but her talents have already made her conspicuous. Her person is happily suited to the dignity of Tragedy, being perfectly well made; her address is agreeable; she is much indebted to nature for a pliancy of features that mark the passions she would present with great expression." Miss Younge was playing *Imogen*, *Jane Shore*, and *Perdita* at Drury Lane in 1768–9, and *Calista*, *Juliet*, *Angelica* in "*Love For Love*," *Lady Dainty*, *Lady Easy*, *Miranda* in "*The Tempest*," and a long list of characters in the following season. She migrated to Dublin in 1770, but returned to Drury Lane in 1771, remaining there as a regular member of the company until 1779. She went over to Covent Garden in 1779 and did not leave that theatre until her retirement in 1797. Her name appears in the bills for the last time on January 26th of that year, her death occurring in March. She was blamed by her friends for marrying Pope, who was very much younger than herself. Garrick had a very high opinion of her ability and she remained always a great favourite of his, although she was certainly one of his "female plagues" of the green-room. On the

last night but one of his public appearances, he played *Lear* to her *Cordelia*. After the curtain fell they made their way hand in hand to Garrick's dressing-room. There they stood staring at one another in mute distress. At last Garrick exclaimed: "Ah, Bessie, this is the last time I shall ever be your father—*the last time!*" Miss Younge, quite overcome, could hardly speak. At last she managed to get out that she hoped that before they finally parted, he would give her a father's blessing. She bowed her head, and Garrick raised his hands and prayed that God would bless her. Then slowly looking round at the others present, he murmured—"God bless you all!"

CHAPTER XI

THE THEATRES AND PUBLIC TASTE

1750–1850

A GLANCE at the list of plays in which the star actresses of the middle of the eighteenth century made their great successes reveals the fact that a considerable improvement in public taste had taken place. No longer were the gross indecencies that occurred in the plays of the Restoration period tolerated, and although the age could by no possible stretch of the imagination be termed strait-laced, a certain degree of decorum was demanded in the plays that were presented to the public. We find our heroines therefore acting a great deal of Shakespeare—in more or less garbled versions of his plays be it noted, for in those days every dramatic dabbler considered himself competent to "improve" upon the original, and not a single play was given without interpolations and alterations—much heavy tragedy, and the comparatively clean comedies of Steele, Farquharson, and Cibber.

During the second half of the eighteenth century, tragic drama was at a standstill. The great successes achieved by Mrs. Cibber and her contemporary tragediennes were made in plays of an earlier period. *Statira* and *Roxana* in Nathaniel Lee's "*Rival Queens*" (1677), *Belvidera* in Otway's "*Venice Preserved*" (1682),

Monimia in the same dramatist's "*Orphan*" (1680), *Zara* in Congreve's "*Mourning Bride*" (1697), and *Calista* in Rowe's "*Fair Penitent*" (1703) were favourite parts, for the possession of which rival actresses were for ever contending, and of which the public never seemed to tire. Rowe's "*Jane Shore*" (1713), although ponderous and artificial, provided the part of *Alicia* in addition to the title-rôle, and was popular with both actresses and audiences; but Johnson's "*Irene*" (1749) was a failure, and soon forgotten. A period of dull, tiresome tragedies, of which Glover's "*Boadicea*" (1753), Moncrieff's "*Appius and Virginius*" (1754), Franklin's "*Earl of Warwick*" (1766), are typical examples, followed in unbroken succession, and lasted until Sheridan Knowles and Bulwer Lytton began to write for the stage, at a much later period. Home's tragedy of "*Douglas*," produced in Edinburgh in 1756 and at Covent Garden in 1757, must be taken as an exception to the above statement. It is difficult for modern taste to discover what constituted the charm of this particular tragedy, but its popularity was undoubted. The part of *Lady Randolph*, originally played by Peg Woffington, to whom it was quite unsuited, was afterwards made famous by Mrs. Barry, and later still by Mrs. Siddons. This play enjoyed a long period of popularity, being revived over and over again until far into the following century. In Scotland it was regarded as much a national play as "*Rob Roy*," and the humblest frequenter of the gallery knew it by heart. At one of the representations of it at Covent Garden an enthusiastic Scotsman in the pit sprang to his feet and, addressing the audience, shouted, "Where's your Wully Shakespeare the noo?"—so carried away was he by pride in his compatriot's achievement.

Another tragedy that survived until well into the nineteenth century was Murphy's "*Grecian Daughter.*" This play, in which Mrs. Barry created the part of *Euphrasia*, was produced at Drury Lane in 1772, and was acted about twelve times in succession, quite a big success in those days, when the regulation run of a new play was nine nights. The "*Grecian Daughter*" met with a success far beyond its deserts, however. Murphy's tragedies were greatly inferior to his farces and comedies, although his "*Orphan of China*" (1759) enjoyed revivals in 1764 and 1777.

In comedy, the actresses of the mid-eighteenth century had not only a wide field amongst the writers of the first three decades of the century from which to choose a succession of grateful parts, but, tragic writing being virtually at a standstill, the latter half of the century was particularly rich in the production of capital comedies and rattling farces. Of the bygone period the comedies of Wycherley, Vanburgh, Congreve, Steele, Farquhar, and Colley Cibber provided some of the most famous representations of the great comedy actresses of the century. Farquhar's "*Beaux' Stratagem*" (1707) contained the part of *Mrs. Sullen*, created by Nance Oldfield, and ever after regarded as a safe "draw" by her successors; whilst his "*Constant Couple*" (1701), in which the part of *Sir Harry Wildair* was originally made famous by Wilks, gave Peg Woffington the opportunity of creating a positive furore. Cibber's "*Careless Husband*" (1704) and his "*Provoked Husband*" (1728) gave to the world the truly fascinating parts of *Lady Betty Modish* and *Lady Townly*, both originated by Nance Oldfield, and played with gusto by every famous comedienne who succeeded her. Coffey's farce, "*The Devil to Pay*" (1731), brought

Kitty Clive the establishment of her reputation as *Nell*, which remained always one of her favourite parts.

Between Cibber's "*Provoked Husband*" and Hoadley's "*Suspicious Husband*" (1747), the wit of the comic dramatists seems to have lacked inspiration. Hoadley's comedy is one of the best that has been written. At its original representation, Mrs. Pritchard surpassed herself in the part of *Clarinda*. Of Fielding's farces, written between 1728 and 1743, "*The Miser*" (1733), containing the famous *Lappet*, one of Kitty Clive's masterpieces, is best remembered, whilst "*The Intriguing Chambermaid*" (1734), in which the same inimitable actress created the part of *Lettice*, and "*The Virgin Unmask'd*" (1735) were very successful pieces.

In 1766 came the elder Colman's "*Clandestine Marriage*," a capital comedy, destined to live an active life almost to the middle of the next century. In this play Kitty Clive originated the mirth-provoking *Mrs. Heidelberg*, beloved of every subsequent comic actress. The same writer's "*Jealous Wife*" (1761) had been equally successful, the parts of *Mrs. Oakly* and *Lady Freelove* being taken by Mrs. Pritchard and Kitty Clive respectively. Arthur Murphy's spirited comedies belong also to this period. His "*The Way to Keep Him*" (1760), written at first in three acts, but enlarged later to five, was enormously successful, and became a stock piece. The part of *Muslin*, made famous by Kitty Clive, remained always a favourite. His "*All in the Wrong*" (1761) was another excellent comedy, whilst his farce "*The Upholsterer*" (1758), although not so long-lived, gave the wonderful Kitty another plum in the part of *Slipslop*, a name that was later changed to *Termagant*.

In 1768 a new species of comedy, called the sentimental, came into fashion. The originator of this class of piece had in reality been Steele, who, in his three comedies, "*The Tender Husband*" (1703), "*The Lying Lover*" (1704), and "*The Conscious Lovers*" (1721), had paved the way to the profound mawkishness of Kelly's "*False Delicacy*" (1768). In this class of piece virtue was extolled to the point of absolute boredom; sickly sentimentality took the place of feeling, and modesty was insisted upon until it could only be taken for insipidity. The scene of the bailiffs in Goldsmith's "*Good-Natured Man*" very nearly wrecked the play — it was thought too vulgar to be quite "genteel"! Fortunately, this prudishness was short-lived; Goldsmith's delightful "*She Stoops to Conquer*," given to Covent Garden in 1773, putting sentimentality to flight, for the time at least.

From the retirement of Garrick, in 1776, although tragedy continued to languish, the taste for robust natural comedy and brisk rattling farce became firmly established. Sheridan's brilliant comedy "*The School for Scandal*," produced on May 8th, 1777, leapt into instant fame, and has remained a classic to this day. It provided Mrs. Abington with the part of *Lady Teazle*, her performance being one of the traditions of the Stage, and Miss Pope with that by which she is best remembered, *Mrs. Candour*. This excellent actress was indebted to the same author, two years later, for another grateful part, that of *Tilburina* in "*The Critic*." Macklin's "*Man of the World*," Burgoyne's "*Heiress*" (in which Miss Farren created the part of *Lady Emily Gayville*), Cumberland's "*The Jew*" and his "*Wheel of Fortune*," and the farces of Reynolds, all belong to this period. Mrs. Cowley's

bright comedy the "*Belle's Stratagem*," produced at Covent Garden in 1780, and destined to enjoy a revival about a century later at the hands of Irving and Miss Ellen Terry, and most of Holcroft's pieces, were produced about this time. The latter's "*The Road to Ruin*" (1792) was translated into Danish and German, and was revived as late as 1873.

In the closing years of the eighteenth century the tragic stage had a kind of semi-revival in "*The Stranger*" by Kotzebue, which was put on at Drury Lane by Sheridan in 1798. This piece was turgid and full of bathos, but it was interesting as marking an advance from the mere representation of acting to that of character. There was some attempt at naturalism, and the play was sincere and realistic. The part of *Mrs. Haller* gave Mrs. Siddons, despairing of a new part that would give scope to her genius, a grand opportunity. She played it no less than twenty-six times in four months. It is interesting to note that "*The Stranger*" lived on long after the Kemble period, and was given a couple of revivals many years after the period covered by this book. "*Pizarro*," which followed "*The Stranger*," was melodrama pure and simple. It was adapted by Sheridan from a translation of another of Kotzebue's plays, and was quite absurdly bombastic and blood-curdling.

Before leaving the eighteenth century, brief mention must be made of a form of entertainment exceedingly popular during the latter half of it. This was the musical farce or operatic drama. The great progenitor of this class of entertainment was, of course, the "*Beggar's Opera*," produced at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1728, and written by John Gay. This play was, in part, a *revue* ; it satirized Italian opera, and was supposed to

satirize Walpole and Townshend. It originated in an observation of Dr. Swift to Gay to the effect that a Newgate Pastoral might make "an odd pretty sort of thing." Gay was of the same mind for a time, but afterwards thought it would be better to write a comedy on the same plan and so began on "*The Beggar's Opera.*" When it was done it was shown to Congreve, who remarked that it would "either take greatly, or be damned confoundedly." Fortunately for Gay it *did* take greatly. It was received with wild applause, and was acted for sixty-three days without intermission. Besides being revived the following season with equal success, it found its way all over Wales, Scotland, and Ireland, carrying everything before it. Miss Fenton, the first *Polly Macheath*, became a duchess—ladies carried about with them the favourite songs inscribed upon their fans; its scenes were depicted upon the fire-screens that adorned the houses of the *élite*—and, furthermore, it drove out of England, for many years to come, the Italian Opera it had made ridiculous. The piece aroused a great deal of controversy. Some declared that by making a highwayman a hero and dismissing him in the end unpunished, crime would be encouraged and vice exalted. Our friend Kitty Clive, certainly no purist, considered "*The Beggar's Opera*" a most pernicious play, calculated to do much harm. At a much later date the outcry levelled by some against the play resulted in an application from the magistrates of Bow Street requesting the managers of Covent Garden and Drury Lane "not to exhibit this opera, deeming it productive of mischief to society." Garrick consented to this request, but Colman refused.

"*The Beggar's Opera*" held its own for many years without imitators. By the middle of the eighteenth

century, however, a decided taste for this kind of piece made itself felt. Charles Dibdin, the composer of "Tom Bowling," stepped into the breach and provided "*The Padlock*" (1768), and "*The Waterman*" (1774), "*The Quaker*" (1775). These were all musical pieces and were very popular. But more popular still were Bickerstaff's "*Love in a Village*" (1762), his "*Lionel and Clarissa*" (1768) and the younger Colman's "*Inkle and Yarico*" (1787). These and many others of the same kind were set to music by some of the best composers of the day and were all the rage.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century there was a vigorous demand for new pieces. Fortunately the supply came well up to the demand, capital comedies and farces being supplied by Morton, Colman junr., O'Keefe, Holcroft, Tobin and others. Thomas Dibdin, son of the composer, was in great request also, and produced an astonishing number of plays within twenty years.

Tragedy, however, continued to stand aloof, its place being taken by melodrama, in which performers of the first rank took part. The only tragedies worth mentioning at this time were Shiel's "*Evadne*" and his "*Apostate*," which may be said to have owed their success to the magnificent acting of Miss O'Neill, Charles Young and Macready.

With the rise of Sheridan Knowles, however, tragedy once more came into her own. His "*Virginius*," brought out at Covent Garden on May 17th, 1820, was received with great enthusiasm, whilst his "*Hunchback*," produced at the same house in 1832, with Fanny Kemble as *Julia*, created a veritable sensation. In 1838 came Bulwer Lytton's "*Lady of Lyons*," in which Helen Faucit gave her famous *Pauline*, a never-to-be-

forgotten performance. "*Richelieu*" (1839) and "*Money*" (1840), both by Lytton, were also great successes, Miss Faucit's *Clara Douglas* in the latter making a profound impression.

Turning from this short review of some of the plays which provided our actresses with the characters they represented, we may now take a glance at the theatres which gave them the opportunities of displaying their talents.

In the eighteenth century Dublin was the great nursery for the London stage. To Ireland we are indebted for such actors and actresses as Barry, Ryan, Quin, Delane, Mossop, Peg Woffington, Kitty Clive, Miss Farren, Mrs. Jordan and Miss O'Neill. These names by no means exhaust the list. Whilst amongst dramatists she gave us Farquhar, Steele, Southerne, Goldsmith, Sheridan and O'Keefe.

In 1750 there were but two theatres in Dublin, those of Smock Alley and of Aungier Street. The two companies were united under one management, and seem to have acted alternately at the two houses. In 1758, however, Barry and Woodward built a theatre for themselves on the site of the old music-hall in Crow Street. This move proved disastrous both for themselves and for the existing management at the other two theatres. Dublin was not able to support more than one playhouse, and the result of this rival undertaking was that the various actors and actressses were perpetually moving backwards and forwards between the two managements.

The London star actors and actresses made frequent appearances in Dublin, usually during the summer, when the metropolitan theatres were closed. The theatrical "season" in London only lasted from autumn

until spring, always excepting the little theatre in the Haymarket, which was only licensed to present plays in the summer, when its big rivals were closed.

The only provincial theatres of any consequence in Ireland were those of Cork and Limerick, but England possessed a great number of excellent theatres in the provinces. Foremost amongst these was the one at Bath. Like Dublin, this was a valuable training-ground for the London stage. The managers of the London theatres were in the habit of sending agents down to Bath in search of talent; a complete success in this important centre usually meant that a performer's engagement in London was assured. York, Hull and Leeds also had very important theatres; Tate Wilkinson obtained an Act of Parliament in his own name for two royal patents for a term of twenty-one years for the two former.

These provincial theatres were invaluable to novices, who received an excellent training at them, and were, moreover, able to test their fitness to appear upon the London boards. Sometimes it worked the wrong way, however, for a success in the provinces did not then, any more than now, invariably mean success in London, and a performer who had once left the former and happened to fail in the Metropolis would more than likely be cold-shouldered on return.

It was not until 1843 that the privileges accorded to Drury Lane and Covent Garden were abolished. Up to that date, although for some years previous to it minor theatres had been gradually springing up, the legitimate drama could only be given at the patent theatres. Meantime the Metropolis was growing apace, and its population increasing by leaps and bounds. Moreover, a new theatrical audience had been gradually

COVENT GARDEN THEATRE.

FRONT OF THE LITTLE THEATRE, HAYMARKET (1815).

developing. In the days of Garrick the theatre was only frequented by the nobility and gentry, together with professional men and critics. The gallery even was only patronized by the middle classes—the lower orders did not go to the play at all, having, as their amusement, cock and dog fighting, bear and bull baiting, pugilism and such-like edifying pastimes. When, however, towards the end of the eighteenth century, horses and elephants and variety shows were brought to Drury Lane and Covent Garden, the lower orders were occasionally sufficiently attracted to leave their brutal sports and attend at one or other of the playhouses.

Having acquired a taste for the theatre, these new patrons demanded more exciting and blood-curdling fare than was provided in the plays of Shakespeare and Sheridan. Nor were they alone in this. The taste of the general public was deteriorating rapidly. Between the years 1809 and 1821 Covent Garden was in possession of such actors and actresses as John Kemble, Macready, Young, Charles Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Miss O'Neill, Mrs. Jordan, Mrs. Davenport, and a host of lesser but important lights, and yet the entertainment consisted largely of melodrama, into which were introduced processions, real water, dogs, horses, and, in fact, anything sensational that thought and money could provide.

To supply these old and new audiences with the fare they demanded, new theatres began to spring up all over London, and one by one procured permission from the Lord Chamberlain to perform during the summer months. But to evade the Licensing Act of 1737, which not only established a censorship over the drama but strictly prohibited more than two theatres

in the Metropolis, the style of entertainment offered at these minor theatres was termed a "Burletta." As a matter of fact, every type of performance was made to come under this heading—opera, pantomime, burlesque, melodrama—with the exception of tragedy and comedy. The one hard and fast rule was that a certain number of songs should be introduced, and a few notes on the piano struck during the performance.

It is not surprising to find that the patent houses fought desperately against these changes, nor that the minor theatres as vigorously petitioned to have all restrictions removed. Between the two the Lord Chamberlain had a pretty warm time of it. Gradually the minor theatres encroached upon the old monopoly. Only allowed at first to give performances in the summer months, they gradually extended the time, the great houses, in retaliation, carrying on their winter season until it found its way well into the summer. As time went on, the Press and public began to take sides in the discussion. William Macready, who was in favour of unlimited competition, petitioned Parliament to that effect. Influential men threw themselves into the fray and ranged themselves on one side or the other. The controversy waxed furious at last; disputes between the monopolists and the new-comers produced so many appeals to the powers that be and caused so much litigation, that the matter was at last taken in hand by Parliament. A committee was appointed to go into the whole matter, and finally Sir James Graham introduced and carried a Bill, in 1843, which abolished the patent privileges and placed all London theatres under the jurisdiction of the Lord Chamberlain.

CHAPTER XII

ELIZABETH FARREN

ELIZABETH FARREN, afterwards Countess of Derby, was the daughter of an apothecary and surgeon of Cork. George Farren, a man of restless disposition and somewhat irregular habits, after toiling for some years at a profession which he considered dull and lacking in variety, suddenly decided to throw up his job and join a company of strolling players who happened to visit the town. For some years he wandered about Ireland in a more or less starving condition, and eventually, tiring of this hand-to-mouth existence, he crossed the Channel in order to try his luck in the sister country.

Upon his presenting himself at the Liverpool theatre, the manager engaged him to play small parts at a small fixed salary. To the man who for some years had found great difficulty in supplying himself with sufficient food to maintain existence, this secure billet seemed the very height of good fortune. Being a man of some ability, he managed to give a pretty fair account of himself in the parts entrusted to him, and with a regular though somewhat meagre supply of coins to jingle in his pockets, he felt himself to be in a position of affluent prosperity beyond his wildest dreams. Unfortunately, his sense of well-being before long showed itself in an increasing

partiality for strong ale, of which he imbibed such enormous quantities that he was frequently too intoxicated to turn up at the theatre. Once or twice, when he did turn up, he was in a condition highly detrimental to the smooth progress of the play. A diverting anecdote in illustration of this was told in Liverpool at the time. On one occasion, so runs the story, poor George Farren had, in the course of the play, to stand in the middle of the stage and tear up a letter. He was, however, so tipsy, that after trying seven or eight times to do so and missing the letter altogether, he suddenly gave up the attempt. Cleverly changing the words he had been repeating—"and thus I tear up the letter"—to "and thus I throw the letter from me," he hurled it to the floor, and the play was at last able to proceed.

It was in a public-house in Liverpool that Farren is supposed to have met the girl who was the future mother of Elizabeth Farren. She was the daughter of a publican called Wright, and was fresh-faced, pretty, and sensible. Farren's visits in search of ale becoming more and more frequent, a friendship sprang up between the two, which later changed into love-making. After a few months of courtship the pair became man and wife, and Mrs. Farren being ambitious to shine on the boards in company with her husband, the young couple made a tour of the provinces, picking up what engagements they could get.

Then followed years of wandering from place to place, with deprivation and uncertainty as companions. Four children were born to them during those years—three girls and a boy. Of these, two died young, and of the survivors one was Margaret, afterwards Mrs. Knight, and the other Elizabeth, who was to be one of

the most brilliant actresses of the day, and eventually to pick up the coronet of a countess.

In a picturesque story told by Doran in his book "Knights and Their Days," we find the first mention of Elizabeth Farren as a separate identity. In the early morning hours of Christmas Day, 1769, we are told, a boy was standing in the doorway of an upholsterer's shop in the market-place at Salisbury. It was freezing hard, and the square was coated with a layer of ice that made walking extremely difficult. No one was in sight when the boy first cast his eyes upon the scene, but as he stood peering out into the gloom he saw a small object appear in the distance, moving cautiously across the market-place. It turned out to be a little girl carrying a bowl of milk in her arms. She was thinly clad, and very unsteady upon her feet as she tried to make her way over the frozen surface, and the boy expected every moment to see her fall flat upon her face. The bowl required a good deal of balancing, and once or twice the child stood still and looked despairingly about her, as though she felt the hopelessness of conveying the milk in her charge safely to its destination. The sight of her distress aroused all the boy's chivalry. He made a run to give him impetus, shot one leg in front of the other, and slid with express speed to the side of the little maiden in distress. For a moment they clung to each other in order to maintain both their equilibrium and the safety of the precious contents of the bowl, and then stood smiling at each other when they found that their efforts had been successful. The milk, it appeared, was to form the breakfast of the hapless George Farren, who was at that moment in the lock-up on the other side of the market-place for

having unconsciously infringed one of the city laws, and the little maid who was carrying it was Elizabeth Farren. Constituting himself her escort and protector, the boy, who later in life was no less a person than Chief-Justice Burroughs, proudly assisted her to her destination, and, on reaching it, lifted her up in his arms so that she could reach the prison window. The milk was safely handed in between its bars, and, being hot, no doubt for once was found an acceptable substitute for good brown ale. Two hours later the little girl's father was released.

Mrs. Farren was left a widow after some ten or twelve years of married life. She was a good wife and mother, and by practising the strictest economy had managed to keep her children decently clothed and fed. Without such part of Farren's earnings as had fallen to her share, however, she was, after his death, reduced to direst straits. It was impossible to make both ends meet unless the two girls could contribute something to the common pot, and they were therefore put upon the stage at a very early age. Margaret developed a taste for playing pert chambermaids, whilst Elizabeth made a decided hit as *Edward the Fifth* in the play of "*Richard III.*"

For another year or two the girl, who was in after years to be dubbed by Walpole the most perfect actress he had ever seen, continued to follow the fortunes of the small touring company to which her mother was attached. Hunger frequently stared them in the face; they were often destitute of clothing. The company was a wretched one. Sometimes, when funds were so low that it was not possible to pay for the hire of a vehicle to carry the wardrobe and scenery, the players had to tramp the roads in their progress from

town to town, carrying the whole of their stock-in-trade upon their backs. Legend relates that on these occasions it invariably fell to the lot of little Elizabeth Farren to carry the drum. That instrument, it must be explained, always accompanied the journeyings of the small strolling companies of those days. When, for economical reasons, it was not possible to make out a large number of bills with which to advertise the performance about to be given, it was the custom to distribute the few that existed to the accompaniment of beat of drum in order that the noise might attract the attention of the inhabitants. Larger and more important companies, in order to advertise the fact of their superior status, would often insert at the bottom of their bills the following notice: "N.B.—The company do not use a drum."

The little blue-eyed Elizabeth of those days, dancing along the roads with the drum balanced upon her head, forms a fascinating picture in the light of our knowledge of the subsequent brilliance of her career. There is a story that in the course of one of these wanderings the company to which she belonged was overtaken by a very heavy shower whilst out upon the road, and that "Betsey" Farren, finding her drum an insufficient shelter from the pelting rain, called out to one of the gentlemen of the company: "Here, Mr.——, give me the fat Alderman, he shall cover me!" The fat Alderman, be it noted, was the picture of the Alderman used in Cumberland's comedy of "*The West Indian.*"

Whether these legends are true or not, they serve their purpose in the history of Elizabeth Farren's career by accentuating the contrast between the undoubted obscurity of her earliest days and the almost

dazzling celebrity of those that were to follow. Like so many of those of her predecessors whose childhood was spent amidst sordid surroundings, she had something within her that neither hunger, nor rags, nor insufficient shelter could extinguish; with her, and those like her, it is only a question of whether, and how soon, an opportunity can be found of securing a fair "place in the sun."

To Elizabeth that same opportunity was ever drawing nearer and nearer. In 1772, namely when she was somewhere about thirteen years old, her circumstances had begun to improve. She, together with her mother and sister, had been engaged by Mr. Whiteley, manager of the Wakefield theatre. This in itself was a far cry from the old days of miserable toiling from place to place, in the company of a band of fifth-rate strolling players. Bills were posted all over the town announcing the immediate appearance of the "Young Queen of *Columbines*." Elizabeth, whose fairy-like figure and dainty freshness made of her a most bewitching *Columbine*, created quite a furore. She sang between the acts of the previous tragedy, and, as she had intelligence as well as a charming voice, the effect she produced by her singing was almost as pronounced as that made by her acting and dancing.

According to one account, this successful performance is said to have been the means of securing the attention of Mr. Younger, the manager of the Liverpool theatre, who is stated to have been present in the audience and to have been very much struck by the promise she showed. Another account, however, credits Whiteley with having given her a letter of introduction to Younger, who engaged both mother

and daughters out of compassion for their poverty-stricken appearance. These details are immaterial; the important fact emerges that the trio next found themselves members of the Liverpool company, and that Elizabeth was, in the year 1773, announced to play *Rosetta* in the opera "*Love in a Village.*" Her performance aroused great enthusiasm, and when she followed up this success a few nights later with an excellent representation of *Lady Townly*, the town realized that, young as she was, they had got amongst them an actress who promised to belong to the very first rank. Mr. Younger was wild with delight. He had completely lost his heart to his brilliant young protegée and spared no pains to instruct her in her profession. She remained under his management for several years, during which she made rapid strides in perfecting her art. She was ambitious and worked desperately hard. To those years in Liverpool, with their strenuous labour and ever-widening experiences, Elizabeth Farren doubtless owed the position of eminence she eventually attained.

Prime favourite as she was with the Liverpool public, the time at last arrived when Younger, who was as generous as he was appreciative, felt that she ought to rise to still giddier heights. He therefore gave her an introduction to George Colman at the Haymarket, who immediately engaged her. On the 10th of June, 1777, she made her début in the Metropolis, as *Miss Hardcastle* in "*She Stoops to Conquer.*" She was received with every mark of favour by the critical London public, although some of the critics had, naturally, faults to find. "When Miss Farren," said one of these, "learns to tread the stage with more ease; to modulate and vary her

voice; to correct in spirit and regulate her action; and to give a proper utterance to her feelings by a suitable expression of voice and countenance, in our opinion she will be a most valuable acquisition to our London theatres."

Miss Farren's person is described at this time as thin, "genteel," and of middle stature. Without possessing actual beauty, her face was expressive and full of animation, while her bright blue eyes and winning smile were very captivating. The success of her *Miss Hardcastle* was soon followed by that of her *Maria* in "*The Citizen*," her already celebrated *Rosetta*, and her *Miss Tittup* in Garrick's "*Bon Ton*." Her popularity increasing with every performance, Colman entrusted to her the part of *Rosina* in "*The Spanish Barber, or the Useless Precaution*," his adaption from "*Beaumarchais*."

Our actress was now fairly launched upon her London career. Nevertheless, her financial circumstances, although much improved, were as yet far from being affluent. She and her mother lodged in Suffolk Street, near the Haymarket. Their fare was often of the homeliest description, the fond mother attending to the housekeeping herself and, having been trained throughout long years in a hard school of compulsory economy, no doubt making the very most of the still all too meagre contents of the common purse. The elder Colman is said to have bestowed upon her the nickname of "Tin-pocket." The anecdote which originated it is so good that it must be given here, although we cannot vouch for the truth of the story.

One morning after rehearsal, Mrs. Farren appeared to be more than commonly anxious to hurry her

MISS FARREN.

daughter away from the theatre. She kept following her about, repeatedly exclaiming in an audible whisper: "It will be cold! It will be cold!" Colman, who had been observing her growing agitation with curiosity, fancied that he smelt something eatable, but could not at first make out where the savoury smell came from. At last his eye fell upon Mrs. Farren's pocket, and something in her expression telling him that he had at last found the key to the mystery, he went up to her and good-humouredly insisted upon examining that convenient receptacle. What was his amusement on finding that the pocket was lined with *tin* and was filled with hot boiled beef! The good lady had evidently paid a visit to the cook-shop and was conveying home the mid-day meal. Afterwards, when she had recovered from her embarrassment, she explained to Colman that she had had her pocket lined with tin in order not to waste the gravy she procured with the meat.

The following season, namely that of the summer of 1778, Colman's comedy "*The Suicide*" was produced at the Haymarket, Miss Farren being chosen to originate the character of *Nancy Lovell*. This was a "breeches" part and totally unsuited to the young actress's figure. She was, in consequence, subjected to a good deal of satirical criticism on the score of "shapelessness," and is said to have forfeited thereby the admiration of Charles James Fox. That gentleman had until then been so enamoured of her charms that it was expected—Miss Farren being a young woman of unblemished morals and unlikely to consent to any less conventional arrangement—that he would eventually offer to lead her to the altar. Her unfortunate appearance in breeches, however, so cooled his ardour

that he abandoned the pursuit for ever. "Damn it!" he is said to have exclaimed. "She has no prominence either before or behind—all is a straight line from head to foot; and for her legs, they are shaped like a sugar-loaf!"

Miss Farren's performance of *Lady Townly*, however, completely restored her to public favour. She had previously, as already related, made a great hit with this part in Liverpool, and when, on August 21st, 1778, Cibber's comedy "*The Provoked Husband*" was given at the Haymarket for Parson's benefit, she obtained a prime opportunity for retrieving her temporary set-back. Her brilliant representation of this now famous part was received with rapture and remained always her most successful rôle.

On September 2nd she followed up this triumph with *Lady Fanciful*, which she played on this occasion for the first time. Her triumph in this part was complete, and at the close of the season she was engaged for the ensuing winter at Drury Lane, where she shared the parts with Miss Walpole, Miss P. Hopkins, and "Perdita" Robinson, not one of the four being as yet twenty years of age. At this theatre and the Haymarket, with the exception of a few isolated appearances at Covent Garden and one or two excursions into the provinces, she remained until her retirement from the stage in 1797.

Her chief opponent at first was Mrs. Abington, who was still a prime favourite and who had possession of all the most successful of Miss Farren's parts. Both excelled in the representation of "fine ladies," and comparisons between them were inevitably drawn. On the whole the palm was given to Mrs. Abington, that is in the earlier stages of the affair; later, of course,

when Mrs. Abington's powers (she was more than twenty years Miss Farren's senior) began to fail, the younger actress entirely superseded her.

Of Miss Farren's *Lady Townly*, Galt says: "It was marked with even more delicacy than Mrs. Abington had been able to show in any of her performances; and in this respect, finely presented a gentlewoman of the same nature, but, in the opinion of the public, more refined."

George Colman the younger declared when eulogizing "the lovely and accomplished Miss Farren," that "no person ever more successfully performed the elegant levities of a *Lady Townly*."

There can be no doubt that Miss Farren had an inborn elegance and distinction which made her peculiarly fitted for the representation of the gentlewoman by birth as distinguished from the fine lady by circumstance. In the opinion of most of her critics, her *Lady Townly* was equal if not superior to that of Mrs. Abington, whilst her *Lady Teazle*, in which a hint of rusticity is required, was inferior. "Miss Farren," writes Mrs. Charles Mathews (wife of Charles Mathews the elder) in her chatty "Tea Table Talk" "was *par excellence* the *fine lady of her time*, and therefore she made *Lady Teazle* the same; yet it may be questioned whether, when Mr. Sheridan wrote '*The School for Scandal*,' he intended his heroine to be represented as the elegant and fine lady that Miss Farren made her. An audience, however, generally expects to behold her according to her existing rank rather in reference to that from which she has been so recently raised; though the account given of her earlier habits and tastes affords no just warrant for such expectation."

This criticism is sound and represents the opinion

of the best judges of that time. In addition, there is no doubt that vivacity rather than sentiment being Miss Farren's *forte*, she was not entirely successful in the more serious portions of the screen scene. Nevertheless, her *Lady Teazle* was certainly the most popular of all her characters and the one that brought her the greatest celebrity. Miss Farren's appearances in tragedy were rare and unaccompanied by success, and although she made a few attempts in characters of low comedy, her face and figure, together with her superbly modulated voice, made her totally unsuited to that line of acting.

Mrs. Abington left Drury Lane in 1782, going over to the other house, and from that time onwards Miss Farren was left in sole possession of all the former's most famous characters. The list of her original creations does not contain many of importance. Amongst them were *Cecilia* in "*Chapter of Accidents*," *Lady Emily Gayville* in "*The Heiress*," *Eliza Ratcliffe* in "*The Jew*," *Sophia* in "*Lord of the Manor*," and *Rosina* in "*The Spanish Barber*."

When playing the last-named her life was endangered. Her gauze mantilla took fire from the sidelights, a fact of which she was totally unaware. Had not Bannister, with great presence of mind, quietly gone up to her and thrown his cloak over her whilst he put out the fire with his hands, she might have come to an untimely end.

In private life Miss Farren had a wide circle of distinguished acquaintances. Although much satire is expended by the scandalous scribblers of her day upon her obscure origin, her small meannesses in money matters, her tendency towards snobbery, and so on, no aspersions seem to have been cast upon the purity

of her morals. At one time her enemies tried to make much of a short sentimental attachment she had for John Palmer, the comedian, and to hint that the intimacy was of a dishonourable character, but this attempt to besmirch her reputation ended abruptly for want of material, and never penetrated beyond the spiteful circle in which it originated.

The Duchess of Leinster had known something of Miss Farren's family in Ireland. Taking a fancy to the brilliant young actress, whose appearance was so distinguished, and who was so gallantly resisting the temptations to which so many of her contemporaries succumbed, she introduced her to Lady Ailesbury, Mrs. Damer, and other great dames of society. From thenceforth Miss Farren's path in the highest circles became one long series of triumphs. She was received and visited upon familiar terms by some of the most distinguished people in London. Her assistance in private theatricals, at that time the rage of the aristocracy, was eagerly sought, and when the Duke of Richmond got up a series of dramatic performances at his house in Whitehall, it was Elizabeth Farren who presided over them and to whom, in a large measure, their success was due.

Amongst the aristocratic amateurs who took part in the above the Earl of Derby was a conspicuous figure. He had for some time been a professed patron of Miss Farren in her professional career, and was an ardent admirer of her beauty and talent. The theatricals evidently put the spur to his *penchant* for her society, for from that time his pursuit of the fascinating Miss Farren became more pronounced ; his admiration began to develop into something warmer. Unfortunately for the actress this attachment could not at that time take

any more satisfactory form than that of friendship, for the simple reason that he had a wife alive, who, although a hopeless invalid and living in retirement, provided an insuperable bar to anything but an irregular union; this with a person of such unimpeachable reputation as Miss Farren was out of the question. It is curious that the intimacy never gave rise to the slightest suspicion of other than innocent relations. Lord Derby introduced the object of his devotion to the members of his family, who soon became on terms of intimacy with her, and showed her every attention that affection and respect could suggest. This fact, coupled with the watchfulness of Miss Farren's mamma, who, it is said, never for one moment allowed her matchless daughter to roam out of her sight, except when upon the stage, doubtless accounted for the frustration of those who would have bespattered the honour of this somewhat unusual pair of lovers if they could.

There can be no doubt, however, that there was an understanding, plain and unequivocable, between Miss Farren and the Earl, that when the invalid Countess should see fit to depart to that other world where marriages are unknown the fair actress should be rewarded for long years of waiting by the reversion of the dead woman's coronet.

These long years unfortunately extended themselves beyond all reasonable expectation. The Countess lingered on for twenty years to tantalize her appointed successor. Throughout all that time his lordship showed all the attentions of an expectant husband. Year in and year out, he sent a servant every morning to Miss Farren's house in Green Street to enquire after her health. His first question on rising used to be,

"How has Miss Farren slept?" Nor could he rest until he had received a satisfactory reply.

At length, however, the sick Countess managed to struggle to the end of her allotted spell. Her death occurring in March, 1797, Miss Farren took her final leave of the stage on the 7th April following. The play chosen for the occasion was "*The School for Scandal*," Miss Farren, of course, playing the part of *Lady Teazle*. The actress had never seemed more animated or in higher spirits than on the night of her last appearance. Throughout the performance she delighted her audience with her vivacity, her elegance and her grace; it was only towards the end that she began to exhibit a consciousness of the sad nature of the occasion. Her manner then visibly underwent a change. She began to speak haltingly, to trip over her words, and finally to break down altogether. Her concluding lines, which by a coincidence were strangely *apropos*, were delivered in a faltering voice: "Lady Teazle, licentiate, begs leave to return the diploma they granted her, *as she leaves off practice and kills characters no longer*." A passionate burst of tears followed the last words, and she was so overcome with emotion that she was obliged to lean for support upon the arm of King, the *Sir Peter* of the play. Wroughton advanced to recite some not very brilliant words of farewell written for the occasion which could hardly be heard for the great outburst of cheering that resounded from every corner of the house. Amidst a great waving of hats and handkerchiefs, with shouts of enthusiasm and regretful cries of farewell ringing in her ears, Elizabeth Farren, blinded by her tears, was led away on the arm of her future husband, and the stage was to know her no more.

On the 1st of May, 1797, the couple whose patience had been so sorely tried were united in the bonds of matrimony. Six weeks "'twixt death and bridal" seems a little more hurried than the laws of strict decency demand, but a genial public received the shock with equanimity. The bride, it was argued, was not far from her fortieth year, and the bridegroom a very great deal older—they had waited long and their conduct had been exemplary—if this haste was just a little unseemly so was it also entirely comprehensible, and well—he was an Earl, and the wedding promised to be a most interesting affair, and that was the end of it.

The ceremony took place by special licence at his lordship's house in Grosvenor Square, and a little later the new Countess was presented at Court. Here, it is said, she enjoyed a fresh triumph, for Her Majesty conversed with her and especially singled her out for notice. It is difficult to believe that the actress who had spent so many years in the most distinguished circles and who must have been perfectly aware of the dictates of good breeding, should so far have forgotten herself as to introduce "shop" into one of her remarks to Queen Charlotte on this occasion. Nevertheless, there is a story to the effect that she informed the Queen that the most blissful moment of her life was that in which she had the "distinguished honour of appearing before Her Majesty" in her "*new character.*" The Queen's reply is not given, but if the story is true we can imagine her bestowing upon the new Countess one of her famous glances of pained surprise.

If the Countess of Derby really was guilty of this little *faux pas*, Queen Charlotte, that "most rigid discriminator of female worth," must have forgiven it, for we read that the Countess was treated with special

attention. She was selected to take part in the procession at the marriage of the Princess Royal with the Duke of Würtemberg, a crowning triumph in the course of a career of exceptional brilliance.

From this time onwards the Earl and Countess spent the greater portion of their time at their country seat. Lady Derby was universally respected; the worst that could be said of her being that, from an instinct of snobbery, she could not bear any allusion to her earlier life, and affected a complete ignorance of everything connected with the stage. There were several children of the marriage, but only one survived.

There is a portrait of Miss Farren in the Mathews Collection of the Garrick Club, and another, which has often been engraved, executed by Sir Thomas Lawrence. She died on the 23rd of April, 1829.

CHAPTER XIII

MRS. JORDAN

TURNING over old documents and play-bills relating to Dorothy Jordan is like going into a disused room that has been long closed up. The blinds are drawn down, the furniture is swathed in holland, a faint scent of pot-pourri hangs upon the air. We wander round the room on tip-toe and, out of curiosity, try to open its drawers and chests and cupboards. With some of them we succeed, and are rewarded by a glimpse within of dainty garments that are tied up with bunches of faded ribbon and overlaid with sprigs of sweet rosemary and lavender. But with one or two we fail, nor will any efforts of ours ever lead to a more satisfactory result. The time has gone by for that. Hinges are rusty, keys are broken in their locks, bolts are stubborn and refuse to yield however eagerly we may try to draw them from their sockets. Mystery lies lurking within those secret hiding-places, and as, baffled, we turn and creep back towards the door by which we entered, we can almost *hear* the dust falling down once more upon the places we have touched, and know that by the time we have reached the open air our finger-prints will have been gently covered up.

Thus is it with the life of Dorothy Jordan. Some episodes in her career are enveloped in a grey mist

through which only one or two people who held her confidence at the time were allowed to penetrate. They died, carrying the secret along with them to a place that lies beyond our reach, and we who would so gladly draw aside the veil are forced to content ourselves with those parts of her history that are known to all the world.

Mrs. Jordan, who, in the words of Hazlitt, was "the child of nature whose voice was a cordial to the heart . . . to hear whose laugh was to drink nectar . . . who 'talked far above singing,' and whose singing was like the twang of Cupid's bow," was born in Waterford in 1762. Her mother was a Miss Grace Phillips, one of the daughters of a Welsh clergyman in poor circumstances. She became an actress and, later, eloped with a certain Captain Bland. The couple crossed to Ireland, and were there married by a Roman Catholic priest. Bland's father, however, infuriated at the marriage, caused it to be annulled on the ground that his son was a minor, and although the couple continued to live together and to rear a large family, the marriage was certainly under a cloud.

The above account of Dorothy's parentage is that given by most of her biographers; there are, however, others who declare that it is a pure invention, and that her father was simply a scene-shifter and nothing more. It is curious that even the history of her birth should have a mystery attached to it like this, and it seems difficult to understand how the difference in the two accounts can ever have arisen.

At a very early age Dorothy or "Dora" Bland, as she signed herself, showed an inclination for the stage. In 1777 we find her playing a variety of parts, chiefly

hoydens and romps, at Crow Street, under the managership of Daly. She played under the name of Miss Francis, and when, in 1778, Daly gave her the part of *Adelaide* in "*The Count of Narbonne*," she was but sixteen years old. Although her progress at first was not as rapid as might have been expected owing to her native indolence and her tendency to refractoriness, by the end of that season she had certainly gained a great deal of applause, and had played a number of parts which included *Viola*, *Priscella Tomboy*, *Mrs. Brady* in "*The Irish Widow*," and *Miss Lucy* in "*The Virgin Unmask'd.*" Daly, well pleased with his new recruit, then took her off to the provinces. It was said that the manager, while Dorothy was with him in Dublin, persecuted the young girl with his attentions and tried to get her into his power by lending her money. Later, when she gave birth to her first child, Daly was credited with being its father, a report for which there seems to have been considerable foundation.

In the provinces "Miss Francis" created a sensation and took all hearts by storm. At Cork she made forty pounds by a benefit procured for her by the "young bucks" of that city. Her admirers were legion. She was not, strictly speaking, beautiful, but her face was so alive with feeling, her eyes so expressive, her voice so melodious, that people lost their hearts to her whether they would or no. Her laugh was so infectious that those who heard it, even when she herself was not in sight, laughed in sympathy. Not witty, not particularly brilliant in any way, there was a whimsical charm about her, a magnetic fascination, that drew men irresistibly towards her and laid them willing victims beneath her feet.

Offers of marriage to penniless actresses did not

grow on gooseberry bushes in those days, but when Dorothy was on this tour and visited her native Waterford, an officer quartered there fell so desperately in love with her that he subsequently offered her his hand. This offer Dorothy would probably have accepted had it not been for the intervention of her mother, who scented danger to the prospects of the whole family were its chief breadwinner to be carried off. Mrs. Bland's experience of the stage was quite extensive enough to tell her that Dorothy had a great future before her. This Lieutenant Charles Doyne had nothing but his pay to offer the girl he married, and were Dorothy to settle down to a humdrum domestic existence of domestic bliss at this stage of affairs her contributions to the family exchequer would probably be *nil*. The gallant officer was therefore sent about his business, and Mrs. Bland, not leaving anything to chance, conveyed her charge out of reach of further dallying by taking her over to seek pastures new in England.

Accompanied by mother, sister, and brother, the young actress arrived at Leeds in search of Tate Wilkinson, manager of the York company. Tired, dishevelled, and travel-stained, they put up at a small hotel, and sent word to Wilkinson that they had arrived. Curiosity and sentiment combined—for in Mrs. Bland Wilkinson recognized the Miss Grace Phillips who had played *Desdemona* to his *Othello* in 1758—impelled him to visit them at once. Dorothy was at once introduced by the proud mother, and her praises sung with no uncertain note. The girl, however, looked dispirited and fatigued, and Tate Wilkinson was not at all inclined to pay too much heed to the mother's raptures. When he asked Dorothy to

recite something in order that he might judge of her talent, she declared that she was too much out of spirits to do herself justice, but begged that he would give her the opportunity of appearing in some part that would give her a real chance of proving to him what she was worth. When he asked her whether her line was comedy, tragedy, or opera, he was tremendously taken aback at receiving the answer—"ALL." This seems to have clinched matters. Dorothy was enrolled a member of his company, and announced to play *Calista* on the 11th July, 1782.

At that early date comedy had not been thought of for her. Her plaintive voice, clear articulation, and mobility of feature all seemed to point to tragedy, and for tragedy she was accordingly cast. But another surprise for Wilkinson was in store. Mrs. Bland suddenly took it into her head that her daughter should sing the ballad "The Greenwood Laddie" after the tragedy. She therefore insisted that this item should be announced in the bills. Wilkinson was thunderstruck. That *Calista* should rise from the dead and appear before an audience that was still mopping its eyes, to sing an unknown pastoral ballad, seemed to be a suggestion that could only have been generated by insanity. In vain he protested that the idea was impossible; Mrs. Bland would not listen—"The Greenwood Laddie" it was to be, or there would be no performance at all. At last Wilkinson gave way, probably not without some shrewd glimmerings of an idea that the ladies knew perfectly well what they were about. His good-natured complaisance received its reward, for when the time came, we are told by Boaden, "on she jumped, with her elastic spring and a smile that nature's own cunning hand had moulded, in a

frock and a little mob cap, and her curls as she wore them all her life; and she sang her ballad so enchantingly as to fascinate her hearers, and convince the manager that every charm had not been exhausted by past times, nor all of them numbered; for the volunteer unaccompanied ballad of Mrs. Jordan was peculiar to her, and charmed only by her voice and manner."

In short, the ballad was a distinct success, and Dorothy had to repeat it wherever she went. Wilkinson was enchanted with his acquisition and took her with him to York. While there she played *Priscilla Tomboy*, with which she made such a success that it was looked upon as one of her most famous parts. Wakefield, Doncaster, and Sheffield were next visited, and then Hull. Before the latter place was reached she had again assumed another name. For some mysterious reason Mrs. Bland had insisted upon her relinquishing the name of Francis. Wilkinson thereupon suggested that she should take the name of Bland, to which she had some sort of claim. But Mrs. Bland asserted that it would give great offence to her husband's relations were their name put upon the bills, and so that idea was rejected. Eventually the name of Jordan was fixed upon. Wilkinson always claimed that he was her godfather on this occasion, and that the name was chosen as a result of his chaffing her about having "crossed Jordan" when she crossed the Irish Channel. The name, he declared, she at once decided upon as being as good as any other.

At Hull, not even the prefix "Mrs." could save our heroine from the tongue of scandal, when she was confined to her lodgings by the advent of a daughter. We may be sure that her fellow-actresses were by this

time just as jealous as they could be, and here was a splendid opportunity for their venom to find free vent. Long before she made her reappearance there was not a shred left of her reputation. The public received her coldly, and when she gave her admired *Calista* it fell flat, whilst her "Greenwood Laddie" was positively hissed. This unpopularity was, however, only temporary; indeed, when we read some of the eulogies that were spoken and written about her, it is difficult to understand how it could have lasted for an hour. Her voice, "liquid and mellow as the nightingale's," was a thing for poets to rave about, and one to make prose-writers extol in the language of poetry. Kemble once said that he never heard her speak without being reminded of a passage in Sterne's "Sentimental Journey": "Like the natural notes of some sweet melody, which drops from it whether it will or no." Leigh Hunt says in his "Critical Essays": "Mrs. Jordan seems to speak with all her soul; her voice, piquant with melody, delights the ear with a peculiar and exquisite fulness and with an emphasis that appears the result of perfect conviction." As to her laugh, it seems to have been no less enchanting than her voice. She "ran upon the stage as a playground, and laughed from sincere wildness of delight." Before so much that was adorable, how was poor Mrs. Grundy to have the slightest chance? It is hardly to be wondered at that Hull soon repented of its harshness, and that when the night of Mrs. Jordan's benefit arrived the whole town flocked as one man to support her. Thus ended her first season in the York company, 1782.

Mrs. Jordan continued with Wilkinson's company until 1785. All this time she was expecting a summons

to London. During her first season at York she had been seen by William Smith, the well-known actor of Drury Lane, who was there for the races. He had been greatly impressed by her acting, and every night of his visit he had sat in the theatre watching her and taking note of every tone, every gesture. His enthusiasm increased each time he saw her play. Tate Wilkinson grew alarmed at this fixed attention, and congratulated himself on having tied up the young actress firmly by contract. For a time at least she could not leave him. Smith resolved to keep his eye on her, and from time to time while she remained with Wilkinson he corresponded with her. Finally it was settled that she should remove to Drury Lane in the autumn of 1785.

As the time drew near for her to be set free, Mrs. Jordan undoubtedly became a little careless. There were many who prophesied failure for her in London. The malicious hinted that she would soon creep back to the provinces and be only too glad if they would have her. Richard Yates, the actor, usually a sound judge, spoke at that time of Mrs. Jordan as "merely a piece of mediocrity."

Mrs. Siddons saw her at York in August, 1785, and expressed her opinion that Mrs. Jordan would do well to remain where she was, and not venture on the London boards.

Her last performance with Wilkinson's company was at Wakefield on Friday, 9th September, 1785, after which she started for London.

Smith had recommended her to Drury Lane as a "good second" to Mrs. Siddons. This was a prospect that filled her with dismay. To play second parts in tragedy, with Mrs. Siddons for ever towering above

her, did not coincide either with her own estimate of her powers or with her ambition, and besides Mrs. Siddons there were Miss Farren and Miss Pope to reckon with. She thought it well over, and came to the conclusion that the best chance for her lay in the playing of tender pathetic parts in tragedy, with comedy parts in Shakespeare, and hoyden romps in farces. Neither Sheridan nor King raised any objection to this decision of hers; it relieved them of the anxiety of having two public favourites competing in the same line of characters. Mrs. Jordan herself was still labouring under the delusion that the strength of her talent lay in tragedy, but, fortunately, force of circumstances forced her genius into the line which was to show it to the best advantage.

On the 18th October, 1785, Mrs. Jordan made her first appearance at Drury Lane in the part of *Peggy* in "*The Country Girl.*" That there was not a moment's doubt of her success is proved by the testimony of Mrs. Inchbald, the staunch friend and admirer of Mrs. Siddons. Mrs. Inchbald knew her in the York company, and records of her that "she came to town with no report in her favour to elevate her above a very modest salary (four pounds), or to attract more than a very moderate house when she appeared. But here *moderation* stopped. She at once displayed such consummate art, with such bewitching nature, such excellent sense and such innocent simplicity, that her auditors were boundless in their plaudits, and so warm in their praises when they left the theatre that their friends at home would not give credit to the extent of their eulogisms."

"Nothing can be more exactly true than this report," says Boaden. "I agree also with that lady in the

MRS. JORDAN.

(In the character of the Country Girl.)

melody of her voice; but in the remark that her pronunciation was imperfect I cannot concur." Boaden is indignant with Mrs. Inchbald because she said of Mrs. Jordan that "most of her words were uttered with a kind of provincial dialect." He declares that it was not of that description at all, but was "a principle of giving to certain words a *fulness* and *comic richness*, which rendered them more truly representative of the ideas they stood for; it was expressing all the juice from the grape of the laughing vine."

It is difficult to realize that at this time this wonderful creature was but nineteen years of age. In some rhymes at the end of this play, *Peggy* thus apologizes for deserting her *Bud*. She says:—

> "I've reasons will convince you all, and strong ones;
> Except old folks, who hanker after young ones:
> Bud was so passionate, and grown so thrifty,
> 'Twas a sad life—and then he was near fifty!
> *I'm but nineteen.*"

A coincidence of course, but one that must have struck most people at the time, although Mrs. Jordan looked, it must be confessed, more than her age. All her actions were youthful, and so was her voice, but there was a maturity in her expression that argued an experience riper than her years. "Perhaps no actress ever excited so much laughter," says Boaden. "How exactly had this child of nature calculated her efficacy, that no intention on her part was ever missed; and, from first to last, the audience responded uniformly in an astonishment of delight."

This first performance was one drawn-out triumph. Smith was naturally in ecstasies. He congratulated his protegée most sincerely, and himself for having presented the theatre with an attraction that would draw on the "off" nights of Mrs. Siddons. Hitherto

it had been difficult to fill the theatre on the nights when Mrs. Siddons did not appear. The farces at the end of her tragedy had usually been acted to a house that was more than half empty, most people leaving the theatre when the tragedy finished, so that they might not have the impression she had made disturbed. But from this time that was all changed. Mrs. Jordan often acted in both play and farce on the same night, and became such a hot favourite that the managers tripled her original salary.

She played *Viola* for the first time on November 11th, 1785. This became one of her most famous parts, and one with which she was identified in the same way as was Mrs. Abington with *Beatrice* and Miss Farren with *Portia*. The world was very lucky to have three such actresses of comedy in quick succession. Each was unique in her own way. Mrs. Jordan's comedy was all feeling, Mrs. Abington's intellectual, and Miss Farren's polished and refined.

After *Viola*, Mrs. Jordan played a variety of parts, and with each one increased the favour with which she was regarded. Her *Miss Hoyden* and her *Widow Brady* were among her most popular parts, and when, at the end of the season, she left London for the country to receive the homage and congratulations of her old friends, it was with the certainty of a warm welcome when she should return.

After a triumphal progress in Yorkshire she proceeded to Edinburgh, where for her benefit she played *Laetitia Hardy* in the "*Belle's Stratagem*," and after the performance came forward and addressed the audience in a poem of her own. She went on to Glasgow, where she was presented with a gold medal, accompanied by the following :—

TO MRS. JORDAN

"MADAM,

"Accept this trifle from the Glasgow audience, who are as great admirers of genius as the critics of Edinburgh."

With the exception of two years—from 1806 to 1807—during which time she retired temporarily from the stage, Mrs. Jordan continued to play at Drury Lane. In 1788-9 her *Rosalind* became the subject of hot controversy. The admirers of Mrs. Siddons contended with those of Mrs. Jordan as to which was the best *Rosalind*, and split themselves up into opposite camps. Boaden seems to have considered Mrs. Jordan's the more perfect, and says that her high animal spirits rendered her the truer *Rosalind*, but Boaden was mad about her and may be regarded as prejudiced. Besides *Rosalind*, Mrs. Jordan played *Sir Harry Wildair*, Mrs. Woffington's great part, *Lady Teazle*, *Miss Hardcastle*, *Mrs. Sullen*, and nearly all the leading comedy parts. On the retirement of Miss Farren she succeeded to some parts that had hitherto been considered outside her range. During the re-building of Drury Lane Theatre, in 1792, she went with the company to the Haymarket and returned with them to Drury Lane. She made her first appearance at Covent Garden as a member of the company in 1811, and made her last appearance on the London stage at the same theatre in 1814. She grew stout in later life, but absolutely declined to play matronly parts.

It would be impossible to quote all the eulogies this wonderful woman earned. Byron declared her to be superb, and Matthew, the elder, called her an "extraordinary and exquisite being, as distinct from any other

being in the world as she was superior to all her contemporaries in her particular line of acting." Hazlitt, Leigh Hunt, Charles Lamb, Sir Joshua Reynolds, are only a few among the long list of those who praised her genius. Sir Jonah Barrington, Judge of the High Court of Admiralty in Ireland, has left a little sketch of her that brings her very vividly before us. Talking of her first appearance in Ireland, he tells us that "Nature was her sole instructress. Youthful, joyous, animated, and droll, her laugh bubbled up from the heart, and her tears welled out ingenuously from the deep spring of feeling." Yet in spite of all the allusions to her gaiety and laughter, Mrs. Jordan was often dejected. Barrington declares that she would often be so low-spirited in the green-room that it seemed impossible she could play. But that "the moment her foot touched the scenic boards, her spirit seemed to be regenerated; she cheered up, hummed an air, stepped light and quick, and every symptom of depression vanished!"

Having followed this extraordinary woman through her professional career, let us turn to her private life, which was no less remarkable, and indeed provided one of the scandals of the day. For many years (Boaden declares that the connection began before she came to London) she was the mistress of Richard, afterwards Sir Richard, Ford. For some time she called herself by the name of Mrs. Ford. By him she had four children, one daughter marrying a Mr. March, in the Ordnance Office, and a second, a Colonel Hawker (afterwards General). The daughter (supposed to be Daly's) who was born in Hull went by the name of Miss Jordan, and eventually married a Mr. Alsop.

In 1790 the Duke of Clarence, afterwards William

IV, fell madly in love with Mrs. Jordan, and begged her to become his mistress. She would, however, have married Ford had he been willing to do so, but as he persistently refused owing to his fear of his father, she calmly told him that if it was to be a choice between two protectors only, she would prefer the protection of the Duke of Clarence. Want of money cannot have been a factor in this decision, for she was at that time in receipt of a salary of £30 a week. The Duke allowed her £1000 a year, but at the suggestion of George III, he subsequently proposed in a letter that it should be reduced to £500. Mrs. Jordan, it is said, sent him by way of a reply the bottom part of a play-bill, bearing the words : "No money returned after the rising of the curtain."

This connection lasted for twenty-one years, during which the couple made their home at Bushey, and lived in a state of domestic contentment that could not have been surpassed had a real marriage taken place between them. By the Duke of Clarence Mrs. Jordan had ten children, all of whom took the name of Fitz-Clarence. Her frequent absences from the stage owing to these maternal claims were resented by her audiences, who subjected her to some angry demonstrations. The year 1890 was a time of political ferment, and her liaison was particularly unpopular. At one of her performances the sounds of disapproval were so loud it was impossible to ignore them. She therefore walked to the front of the platform at the fall of the curtain and made a long speech in defence of her conduct, assuring her audience that she had never absented herself from the theatre except for real indisposition. "Thus having invariably acted," she said, in conclusion, "I do consider myself under the public protection."

The speech was printed in all the papers and the murmurs died down.

It was not long, however, before the connection that was the cause of them itself came to an end. In 1811, the blow, from which Dorothy Jordan never entirely recovered, fell like a thunderbolt from heaven. She was on a visit to Cheltenham at the time. Without any warning she received a letter from the Duke asking her to meet him at Maidenhead with a view to arranging a separation. The awful suddenness of this bombshell very nearly deprived her of her senses. Her engagement at the Cheltenham theatre was concluded, but she had arranged to remain one more night in order to play *Nell* for the "benefit" of an actor. She received the Duke's letter on the very afternoon before the performance. At first it seemed impossible that she should be able to play; she was in a condition bordering on collapse. With extraordinary unselfishness, however, she determined to keep her promise if she could, and accordingly turned up at the theatre. It was a terrible struggle, but she managed to get through with the part of *Nell* until the passage was reached in which *Jobson* has to accuse the conjurer of making her laughing drunk. At that point poor Nell tried her very best to laugh, but to the horror of her fellow-actor she suddenly burst into tears instead. Fortunately he kept his head, and, with marvellous presence of mind, altered the text, and exclaimed: "Why, *Nell*, the conjurer has not only made thee drunk, he has made thee crying drunk."

After the performance Mrs. Jordan was put into her carriage in her stage dress, and sent off to keep her appointment with the Duke. What transpired at that meeting we do not know; we only know that it resulted in a separation that was absolutely final.

Mrs. Jordan was completely broken down. A storm of calumny burst upon her as a result of the rupture, and added to her miseries. In one of her letters she says that she was accused of intriguing with the Duke of Cumberland, but that was only one of the many stories that were circulated about her. The Duke of Clarence himself came in for a good deal of abuse, and many of her letters at this period are written in his defence.

The actual reason for the separation remains a mystery to this day; Mrs. Jordan herself does not seem to have known all the truth of the matter. By some it was attributed to financial reasons, although this does not seem credible as the Duke was in a position to make a most liberal settlement on her. No exception could be taken to the provision that was made for her and her children. Others declared that it was for reasons of State, and again others that it was owing to jealousy; but, whatever the reason was, it is certain that it was known to only a very few and that the secret died with them.

Hazlitt said of Mrs. Jordan: "Her person was large, soft and generous, like her soul." He was right as to her generosity. Not once did she allow herself to say bitter things about her lover, although the temptation to do so must have been great. The following letter to a confidential friend shows how far above meanness or pettiness she was, and how magnanimous she could be:—

"Bushy, *Saturday*.

"My Dear Sir,

"I received yours and its enclosure this morning. My mind is beginning to feel somewhat reconciled to

the *shock and surprise* it has lately received; for could *you* or the *world* believe that we never had, for twenty years, the *semblance* of a quarrel. But this is so well known in our domestic circle, that the astonishment is the *greater!* Money, money, my good friend, or the *want* of it, has, I am convinced, made Him at this moment, the most *wretched* of Men; but having done *wrong*, he does not like to retract. But with all his excellent qualities, his domestic *virtues*, his love for his *lovely* children, what must he not at this moment suffer! His distresses should have been relieved *before;* but this is *entre nous.*

"All his letters are full of the most unqualified praise of my conduct; and it is the most heartfelt blessing to know that, to the best of my power, I have endeavoured to deserve it. I have received the greatest kindness and attention from the R——t, and every branch of the Royal Family, who, in the most *unreserved terms*, deplore this most melancholy business. The whole correspondence is before the R——t, and I am proud to add, that my *past* and *present conduct* has secured me a friend who declares he never will forsake me. My forbearance, he says, is beyond what he could have imagined! But what will not a woman do who is firmly and sincerely attached? Had he left me to *starve*, I never would have uttered a word to his disadvantage. I enclose you two other letters; and in a day or two you shall *see more*, the rest being in the hands of the R——t. And now, my dear friend, do not hear the D. of C. unfairly abused. He has done *wrong*, and he is *suffering* for it. But as far as he has left it in his *own power*, he is doing everything Kind and Noble, even to *distressing* HIMSELF. I thank you sincerely for the friendly *caution* at the end of your

letter, though I trust there will be no occasion for it; but it was kind and friendly, and as such I shall ever esteem it.

"I remain, dear sir,

"Yours sincerely,

"DORA JORDAN.

"These letters are for your eye alone."

The particulars of the allowance made to Mrs. Jordan after her separation from the Duke, and upon what conditions, were publicly stated in a letter by Mr. Barton of the Mint. She was to receive for the maintenance of the Duke's four daughters, and a house and carriage for their use, £2100; for her own use, £1500 per annum; and, to enable her to make provision for her married daughters, the children of her former connection, £800 per annum; making altogether £4400. This settlement was carried into effect, and a trustee appointed; the money was paid quarterly into the respective accounts at Coutt's Bank. The settlement was subject to the following condition, however—that in the event of Mrs. Jordan returning to the stage, the care of the Duke's four daughters, together with the allowance for their maintenance, was to revert to His Royal Highness. A few months later Mrs. Jordan did return to the stage, and thereby forfeited both children and money. She gave as her reason her anxiety to provide for her other earlier family and for herself, in the event of the Duke's death, but it was an exceedingly foolish step to take and one that led up to her subsequent miseries and difficulties.

From this time onwards Mrs. Jordan took temporary engagements, and so marvellous were her powers and so wonderful her fascination that during her last year

in England she made as much as £7000, although she had reached the age of fifty. In spite, however, of this large sum and all the other accumulations she must have possessed, she fell into dire distress, and was obliged to leave the country in order to avoid arrest. The transactions that were responsible for this were never fully understood, and form part of the mystery in which the latter part of her life was enveloped. It seems established that she had incurred very heavy liabilities on behalf of her son-in-law Alsop, then a magistrate in India, and that she was more heavily involved than she had any idea of when she signed the bills. On the other hand, she was known to have accumulated a considerable fortune, and although her generosity towards the members of her numerous family was proverbial, it seems incredible that she should have been reduced to such straits as to have to leave the country. She had plenty of friends who would have helped her out had she so desired, and her fixed determination to go into hiding can never be satisfactorily explained.

As soon as the Duke of Clarence heard that she intended to leave England he insisted that she should be accompanied by a Miss Ketchley, who had for many years been governess to the Duke's children at Bushey. This lady attended Mrs. Jordan until her death, and shared her exile. In August, 1815, they crossed to France, where they lived first at Boulogne. Mrs. Jordan assumed the name of James, and her place of residence was kept a secret. Mr. Barton declared that he had a letter from her in which she alluded to her agony of mind, but in no way hinted that she was in want of money for the means of subsistence. It was not long before she quitted Boulogne

and removed to Versailles, and thence, with even greater secrecy than before, to St. Cloud. Here she lived in complete seclusion under the name of Johnson, in a large dilapidated house in the square adjoining the palace. In these gloomy surroundings Dorothy Jordan's last days were spent. Here the woman whose gay infectious laughter had sent huge audiences into transports of delight drooped and pined in a profound melancholy for which no explanation could be found. The voice that once had gurgled and trilled away all hearts was hushed; the face, once so alive, so full of gaiety and juvenile mischief, had become dull and inanimate. From the time of her arrival at St. Cloud she exhibited a constant anxiety to receive news from England. Every post that arrived, if it did not bring a letter, only increased her anxiety; if it did bring one, she was only plunged into deeper misery than before. At length a time came when several days passed without her receiving a letter. This was almost too much for her to bear. From morning till night she "lay sighing upon her sofa." On the morning of her death her impatience had been more than usually manifest. Her agitation became terrible; she seemed on the brink of some dreadful convulsion. At last she sent a messenger, before the hour of delivery, to go to the post to see if there were any letters. On the messenger's return she started up and held out her hand in anticipation of receiving a letter, and on being told that there was none, stared vacantly in front of her for a moment and then sank down sobbing upon the sofa. A few moments later she expired. This was in July, 1816. That she was not in pecuniary distress was certain. She wore to the last a handsome ring for which she had paid four hundred guineas, and there is abundant

testimony that she was never in actual need. The circumstances of her death, however, evoked much public sympathy in England, and some years later a stone was put on her grave in the cemetery at St. Cloud, with a Latin epitaph in the composition of which Genest declared he assisted.

Not even in death was Mrs. Jordan freed from the atmosphere of mystery that dogged her. A report was circulated that she was not dead, and that she had been seen by various persons in London. Mrs. Alsop, to her dying day, declared that she had seen her mother in the Strand long after she was supposed to be dead. Boaden was positive that he himself saw her, and, as he was an intimate friend of hers and it was broad daylight, it is difficult to see how he can have been mistaken. He relates how, as he was standing looking into the window of a bookseller's shop in Piccadilly, a lady came and stood by his side. He at once recognized Mrs. Jordan, but as she did not speak, but dropped a white veil over her face, he concluded she did not wish to be recognized, and passed on.

Whether she was really seen in the flesh, or whether these appearances were merely due to the vividness with which she was remembered, no one will ever know. Her miserable death created a feeling of uneasiness in the minds and hearts even of those who were least responsible for it; it is not difficult to understand how they might be made the victims of their own too vivid imaginations.

Dorothy Jordan was one of the most amiable and generous-hearted of human beings. "Nature," to quote Hazlitt once more, "had formed her in her most prodigal humour; and when Nature is in the humour

to make a woman all that is delightful, she does it most effectually." Her faults, weaknesses, and imprudences were as the sands on the seashore, but her excellences were more numerous still. We may, I think, safely rest assured that the latter will weigh down the balance when the day comes for the final reckoning up.

CHAPTER XIV

MRS. SIDDONS

"HAVE you ever heard," wrote Garrick, in the spring of 1775, to John Moody, at Liverpool, "of a woman Siddons, who is strolling about somewhere near you?"

This "woman Siddons" was at the time just turned twenty, having first seen the light in Brecon High Street on 5th July, 1755. The eldest child of Roger Kemble, she may be said to have been born and bred to the Stage; in her case there was no parental opposition to be encountered; she just glided naturally into the niche which destiny had prepared for her.

So much has been written of this incomparable actress that nothing new remains to be said. All one can do is to essay a bird's-eye view of her life and her career, showing how, in a century of famous actresses, she came to be regarded as the most famous of them all.

Roger Kemble was what might be described as a "sound" actor, with no great pretensions to distinction, and none to genius. Mrs. Kemble, whose maiden name was Sarah Ward, was the daughter of one John Ward, a strolling manager, and a member of his company, to which Roger Kemble also belonged. According to a paragraph which appeared in the "Globe" of December 31st, 1807, it would

seem that the attachment which sprang up between the two young people was not to the liking of the lady's father, though his objection appears to have been based on purely general grounds. The paragraph referred to ran as follows :—

"The late Mr. Ward made a solemn vow of eternal warfare against his daughter should she marry an actor. The young lady soon after married Mr. Kemble, the father of Mrs. Siddons, a gentleman for some time upon the stage. 'Well, my dear child, you have not disobeyed me; the d-v-l himself could not make an actor of your husband.'"

It may be said that there are several versions of this story extant, one of them being attributed to Roger Kemble with reference to Siddons, who, as will be seen, followed her mother's example and also married an actor.

Mrs. Siddons' childhood is practically barren of anecdote, but one incident is quoted by her most recent biographer, Mrs. Clement Parsons, as foreshadowing something of the greatness that was to come. We are told that on retiring to rest one night, absorbed in the hope of "a pleasure party" next day, at which she was to wear a brand new pink-coloured gown, she took with her to bed the Prayer Book opened at the "Prayer for Fair Weather." Being waked early by the sound of rain beating against her window, she looked down at her Prayer Book, and found that it had somehow opened itself at the "Prayer for Rain." She laid it open once more at the "Prayer for Fair Weather," and quietly went to sleep again, to be greeted on waking by a burst of sunshine. "We can trace," says Mrs. Parsons, "in her renewed trial of the cross-grained Prayer Book a foretaste of the tenacity,

and also of the temperance—the composure—of the adult character."

Love came to her early in life. As already indicated, she married an actor, though there were many—the incomparable Sarah's father amongst them—who would have been inclined to deny him that name. Siddons was a member of Kemble's company, and an adept at filling "utility parts." But this was not an overpowering recommendation in itself to the Kembles, who were naturally anxious that their daughter should make a good match, and Siddons had nothing else to offer. The prospect of the said "good match" seemed forthcoming in the person of one Evans, a small Breconshire country squire. The eager parents urged his claims for all they were worth, and probably a little more. History does not say, but only hints, as to whether Sarah ever wavered in her attachment to Siddons in favour of Evans, but it appears certain that when the former, growing alarmed at the extent of the parental opposition, proposed elopement, she incontinently declined. A quarrel between Siddons and the Kembles followed; the former was dismissed the company but accorded a "benefit" night. Convinced in his heart that Sarah was on her parents' side, he meditated revenge. On the "benefit" night in question he delivered a long "song," composed by himself, in which he poured out his personal wrongs to the world at large. It will be sufficient to quote the first verse of this lengthy canticle:—

> "Ye ladies of Brecon, whose hearts ever feel
> For wrongs like to this I'm about to reveal;
> Excuse the first product, nor pass unregarded
> The complaints of poor Colin, a lover *discarded*."

The results of this outburst were two-fold. First,

Mrs. Kemble boxed Siddons' ears as he left the stage; secondly, Sarah refused the Squire and announced her intention of remaining faithful to her penniless swain. Whether this last was a direct result or not will never be known until the secrets of the feminine heart are revealed for all time. But after some stormy scenes Sarah was packed off for a while as maid or companion to Lady Mary Greathead, of Guy's Cliffe, Warwick, while the engagement between her and William Siddons was tacitly ratified.

Sarah Kemble spent some two years at Guy's Cliffe; years that no doubt had their due effect on the moulding of her character. The quiet serenity of her surroundings, the atmosphere of wealth and comfort and the stately luxury that prevailed, must all have helped to give her a different and a wider outlook upon life.

On 26th November, 1773, her love-tale had its consummation. She was married, when only eighteen years of age, to William Siddons, in Trinity Church, Coventry.

Students of character, especially of the character of the great personalities—and the feminine personalities more particularly—of the Stage, have confessed themselves baffled by the story of Sarah Siddons' one great love affair. Where, they ask, did she get her capacity for the displaying of passion, of deep emotion, which stamped her as the greatest tragic actress the world has ever seen? A woman, they would argue, must have loved and lost, not once, but many times—or to use another quotation scarcely less hackneyed, loved "not wisely but too well"—before she can lay bear her soul to an audience, and thrill them to madness in the process. History, moreover, is largely on their side, as

may be gathered by going no further afield than the present volume.

There is, so far as can be seen, no solution to this paradox. Facts are facts; and Sarah Siddons, snapping her fingers at history, remained to the end a woman innocent of any "affairs" but the virginal one which had its consummation at the altar, if we omit one foolish little episode with a certain Galindo, a fencing-master, which took place when she was forty-seven.

Sarah was introduced to the family profession at a very early age; almost, in fact, as soon as she could speak intelligibly. On April 16th, 1767, at the age of twelve, she made her first recorded Shakespearean appearance, as *Ariel* in Dryden and Davenant's "*Tempest*" at Worcester. *Princess Elizabeth* in Havard's "*King Charles the First*," *Leonora* in "*The Paddock*," and *Rosetta* in the operetta "*Love in a Village*," were other parts that she was playing about this time. Her first appearance on a play-bill as "Mrs. Siddons" was at Worcester, on December 13th, 1773.

It was in the spring of 1775, when she was playing in Liverpool, that the query quoted at the beginning of this chapter was addressed by Garrick to John Moody. Garrick had heard of her from Lord Bruce, afterwards created Earl of Ailesbury, who had seen her act at Cheltenham, and had introduced himself one day to Siddons in the street. Garrick next applied for further information to the Rev. Henry Bate, editor of the "Morning Post," from whom he received two enthusiastic letters and a list of Mrs. Siddons' leading characters —some twenty-three in all. Negotiations were opened, and it was finally decided that she should make her début at Drury Lane, as *Portia*, on Friday, December 29th, 1775.

Meanwhile, in the previous month, November, she had given birth to a daughter; her first child, Henry, having been born in the previous year. There is no doubt that she did not allow herself a sufficiently long period of convalescence, seeing that she, her husband, and the two babies moved to London before the middle of December. This fact may have had something to do with her failure—for failure it was. The part of *Portia*, though it was one she herself favoured, gave her but poor scope for the revelation of her real talent; added to which she suffered from an attack of stage fright. The critics, one and all, condemned her. Even her champion, Bate, in the "Morning Post," could do no more than damn her with faint praise.

But Garrick was by no means discouraged. He was a rare judge of histrionic talent, and he showed his confidence in her by giving her the chance of playing *Lady Anne* to his *Richard III*, and *Mrs. Strictland* to his *Ranger* in Hoadley's "*The Suspicious Husband.*" He encouraged her in every way, and gave her much sound advice on various little faults in her acting and gestures, advice which, unfortunately, she took very ill. In June, 1776, Garrick's public career came to an end with a performance, on June 10th, of "*King Richard III*," when Mrs. Siddons played *Lady Anne* to his *Richard* for the third and last time. She fully expected a re-engagement from the new management, but early in the following summer she received a formal letter saying that her services would not be required during the following season. The blow for a time was a crushing one.

For the next two years or so after her dismissal from Drury Lane she played with various provincial stock companies, finally appearing in Liverpool under the

management of Tate Wilkinson. Hitherto she had been playing, principally, comedy parts, but at York she opened in Murphy's "*Grecian Daughter*" as *Euphrasia*, a part of somewhat heavy domestic sentiment. It was in this character that Leigh Hunt noted her genius for interpolating gestures or actions not provided for in the part, which had a magical effect on the audience. Speaking of the moment when the heroine had unexpectedly received assistance from the guard, *Philotas*, for her father, he wrote: "Transported with gratitude, but having nothing from the poet to give expression to her feelings, she starts with extended arms and casts herself in mute prostration at his feet."

It was in this character, too, that Thomas Lawrence made his famous crayon sketch of her, when only a boy of thirteen, depicting the moment when she stabs her tyrant oppressor.

At the close of the York season she returned to Manchester. From Manchester she proceeded to Birmingham, where she had the opportunity of playing leading parts with John Henderson. He it was who was responsible for her engagement at the Bath theatre in October, 1778.

During the summer of 1777 she divided her time between Manchester and Liverpool. It was in Liverpool, in June, 1778, where she had returned for a further season with Younger, that the famous riot took place, the Liverpool people having announced their intention of refusing to listen to any company that had not appeared before the King. The audience on the opening night would not allow any of the actors a hearing, and finally turned out the lamps, took back their money, and departed from the theatre.

Bath must be looked upon as the real birthplace of Mrs. Siddons' genius. Here it was that she gained her first solid footing on the pinnacle of fame, paving the way for the subsequent triumphant return to Drury Lane. The four seasons she spent in that city of the west stood her in valuable stead in after years, providing her with the necessary experience and a familiarity with a variety of characters. And all the time her talent, like a rose in the bud, was growing nearer to the bursting point of its fulfilment.

She opened in comedy, playing *Lady Townly*, three days later appearing as *Mrs. Candour*, when she earned praise from even Mrs. Thrale, who was not at all inclined to hail her as a queen of comedy. But it was in tragedy that she was destined to score her triumph—a triumph that gradually drew all Bath to the theatre. And not only drew them, but drew them from the frivolities of the ball-room; for at first, owing to the number of leading ladies in the company, she was only, as a general rule, asked to play on Thursdays, the nights of the famous Bath Cotillons. As her reputation as a tragic actress spread, so the attendance in the ball-room grew more meagre and that in the theatre more substantial.

It was now becoming abundantly evident that tragedy was her true *métier*. Her comedy would seem always to have been a little forced and unnatural; but her tragedy came from herself—it was inherent, born in her, part of her very being. The fact that in her private life, untouched by tragic happenings in the earlier days at least, she should have been of such a placid and equable temperament only adds to the wonder of her achievement. The truth is that her own individuality became so merged in the

personality of the part she was playing that it lost itself entirely, thus tending to that naturalness and unaffectedness in her acting which was so universally commented upon by contemporary critics.

To this, too, she owed the fact that her acting was individual, and not influenced in any degree by the acting of other great artists. To frame an apparent paradox: she retained her individuality as an actress by losing it in the characters she portrayed—she simply played them as she felt them. She herself makes a reference to this in a letter to one of her greatest friends in Bath, Thomas Whalley, D.D. She writes:—

"I hope, with a fervency unusual upon such occasions, that you will not be disappointed in your expectations of me to-night; but sorry am I to say I have often observed that I have performed worst when I most ardently wished to do better than ever. Strange perverseness! And this leads me to observe (as I believe I may have done before) that those who act mechanically are sure to be in some sort right, while we who trust to nature (if we do not happen to be in the humour, which, however, heaven be praised, seldom happens) are dull as anything can be imagined, because we cannot feign."

How vividly she became imbued with the personalities of her characters is shown by a passage in her autograph memoranda bequeathed to Campbell. She was studying the part of *Lady Macbeth* late at night.

"I went on with tolerable composure," she writes, "in the silence of the night (a night I never can forget) till I came to the assassination scene, when the horrors of the scene rose to a degree that made

it impossible for me to get further. I snatched up my candle, and hurried out of the room in a paroxysm of terror. My dress was of silk, and the rustling of it, as I ascended the stairs to go to bed, seemed to my panic-struck fancy like the movement of a spectre pursuing me. At last I reached my chamber, where I found my husband fast asleep. I clapt my candlestick down upon the table, without the power of putting the candle out, and I threw myself on my bed, without daring to stay even to take off my clothes."

We may pass over the rest of Mrs. Siddons' sojourn at Bath and come to the day when she reentered Drury Lane and started on her triumphant conquest of London town.

It was on Thursday, 10th October, 1782, that she made her reappearance at Drury Lane, after a lapse of six years. The part chosen for her was *Isabella* in Garrick's version of Thomas Southern's "*Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage*," though it is said that she herself would have preferred to play *Euphrasia* in "*The Grecian Daughter*," a part with which, as we have seen, she was already familiar. The occasion was a momentous one for her, especially in view of her failure six years before. That she felt the importance of it keenly, and how greatly the strain told upon her, is related in her own words in her autobiographical memoranda. On October 8th, two days before the opening night, she was seized with a sudden attack of hoarseness, largely due, no doubt, to nervousness.

"I went to bed in a state of dreadful suspense," she writes. "Awaking the next morning, however, though out of restless, unrefreshing sleep, I found, upon speaking to my husband, that my voice was very much

clearer. This, of course, was a great comfort to me; and moreover the sun, which had been completely obscured for many days, shone brightly through my curtains. I hailed it, though tearfully, yet thankfully, as a happy omen; and even now I am not ashamed of *this* (as it may perhaps be called) childish superstition. On the morning of the 10th my voice was, most happily, perfectly restored; and again '*the blessed sun shone brightly on me.*'

"On this eventful day my father arrived to comfort me, and to be a witness of my trial. He accompanied me to my dressing-room at the theatre. There he left me; and I, in one of what I call my desperate tranquilities, which usually impress me under terrific circumstances, there completed my dress, to the astonishment of my attendants, without uttering one word, though often sighing most profoundly.

"At last I was called to my fiery trial. The awful consciousness that one is the sole object of attention to that immense space, lined, as it were, with human intellect from top to bottom and all around, may perhaps be imagined but can never be described, and can never be forgotten."

The result was a triumph, magnificent and complete. The audience broke into thunders of approval during the performance. But at the end, says Boaden, "literally the greater part of the spectators were too ill to use their hands in her applause."

"I reached my own fireside," her own narrative continues, "on retiring from the scene of reiterated shouts and plaudits. I was half-dead; and my joy and thankfulness were of too solemn and overpowering a nature to admit of words, or even tears. My father, my husband and myself sat down to a frugal, neat

supper in a silence uninterrupted except by exclamations of gladness from Mr. Siddons.[1] My father enjoyed his refreshments, but occasionally stopped short, and laying down his knife and fork, lifting up his venerable face, and throwing back his silver hair, gave way to tears of happiness."

Surely as pretty a domestic picture as one could wish to imagine.

The conquest of London was an accomplished fact; from that day forward the town lay at her feet. There is no need to detail a list of her continued triumphs here—they have long ago passed into the realm of history.

We may, however, turn for a moment to the contemplation of some of her principal parts. During her first season she played seven rôles: *Isabella* in Southern's "*Isabella, or The Fatal Marriage*"; *Euphrasia* in Murphy's "*Grecian Daughter*"; *Jane Shore* in Rowe's play of that name; *Louisa Montague* in Hull's "*Fatal Interview*"; *Calista* in Rowe's "*Fair Penitent*"; *Belvidera* in Otway's "*Venice Preserved*"; and *Zara* in Congreve's "*Mourning Bride*."

"We have, many years ago, wept outright during the whole time of her playing *Isabella*," wrote Hazlitt; while of the "*Grecian Daughter*" it is told that Holman the actor, turning to Macready's father, who was sitting beside him, after the death scene, asked, "Macready, do I look as pale as you?"

Her acting appears to have produced among her audiences generally a tendency to scream, weep, moan, and even to go into hysterics, so vividly did it play upon their nerves.

[1] Her husband had been in far too great a state of nervousness to attend the theatre, and only learnt the joyful news when she returned home.

Of her *Zara* Tom Davies wrote:—

"The expressions of anger and resentment, in the captive *Queen*, seldom failed to excite laughter. Mrs. Porter, who was deservedly admired in *Zara*, and Mrs. Pritchard, her successor in that part, could not, with all their skill, prevent the risibility of the audience in this interview. Mrs. Siddons alone preserves the dignity and truth of character, unmixed with any incitement to mirth, from the countenance, expression, or action."

Her declamation of the familiar lines:

> "Heaven has no rage like love to hatred turn'd,
> Nor Hell a fury like a woman scorn'd"

was deemed well-nigh, if not absolutely, perfect; and her playing of the poison scene was ghastly in its realism.

"*Jane Shore*" gave her a glorious opportunity of which she was not slow to avail herself. The opportunity lay, not so much in the merits of the part as in the possibilities to be derived from it by a great actress, where an inferior actress would fail to make anything of it.

In Rowe's other play mentioned above, "*The Fair Penitent*," the part of *Calista* was chiefly noteworthy for a powerful "rage" scene in her interview with *Horatio*.

The part of *Euphrasia* in Murphy's "*The Grecian Daughter*" has already been referred to. It is sufficient to say here that it was eminently suited to her heroic style, and was, as we have seen, the part she would herself have chosen for her reappearance in London.

Her *Monimia* in Otway's "*The Orphan*" must not be forgotten, if only for the sake of the beautiful lines it fell to her to speak in the death scene.

A part which she essayed for the first time during her second London season (after her reappearance) in 1783 was that of *Mrs. Beverley* in Moore's "*The Gamester*." Her brother John played the part of *Beverley*, originally created for Garrick. She played it consecutively for twenty-nine years, and, outside her Shakespeare parts, it is the one that is, perhaps, most closely associated with her name.

The part of *Lady Randolph* in "*Douglas*," which had hitherto been the private property, as it were, of Mrs. Crawford, was also essayed by Mrs. Siddons for the first time during the season of 1783. This was in the nature of a direct challenge to the older actress, and on the whole it would appear that the victory lay with Mrs. Siddons, though both interpretations naturally had their separate adherents.

It is curious to note that the first Shakespearean character, apart from her disastrous appearance as *Portia* already mentioned, and as *Lady Anne* to Garrick's "*Richard III*," impersonated by Mrs. Siddons, was that of *Isabella* in "*Measure for Measure*"—which she first essayed on 3rd November, 1783. From this to *Constance* in "*King John*" was a large step; but the latter, her second Shakespearean part, was to prove a lasting triumph, and has always been reckoned one of her most perfect achievements among the long list of Shakespeare's heroines whom she portrayed from time to time during her career.

She first played *Constance* in December, 1783; some fourteen months later, on 2nd February, 1785 (her "benefit" night), she made her initial appearance as *Lady Macbeth*.

The intensity with which she "felt" this character has already been referred to in this chapter. History

has long ago acknowledged her supremacy in this part, a supremacy which, it is not unfair to say, has never been endangered from that day to this. Much has been written in the way of critical analysis of her interpretation, but any further elucidation on these lines lies outside the scope of the present book. It would be interesting, otherwise, to compare in detail her rendering of the part with those of other great actresses who have essayed it during the last hundred years of dramatic history.

Of her *Desdemona*, first played on 8th March, 1785, Campbell wrote: "The notion I had preconceived of her pride and majesty made me think that 'this soft, sweet creature could not be the Siddons.'"

Ophelia, and the part of *Katharina* in "*The Taming of the Shrew*"—characters as far asunder as the poles—she acted but once, the former with considerable, the latter with indifferent, success. *Juliet* was another single performance—great only in the poison scene. She also played *Beatrice* in "*Much Ado About Nothing*," in Bath, though never in London.

Smarting under her former failure as *Portia*, she revived the part in London in April, 1786, but, though no longer a failure, she appears to have left no great impression.

Her *Rosalind* in "*As You Like It*" was hampered by her natural modesty which led her to disguise her figure with a curious garment that was neither "of woman nor of man," a fact that the critics universally fell foul of. Beyond that, she lacked the necessary archness.

The Rt. Hon. William Windham seems to have hit the matter off to a nicety when he wrote in his diary: "The highest praise that can be given to her comedy

is that it is the perfection of art; but her tragedy is the perfection of nature."

Imogen ("*Cymbeline*") and *Cordelia* ("*King Lear*") and *Volumnia* ("*Coriolanus*") were also played by her more than once, but contemporary criticism has but little to say about either of the two first-named, and scarcely much more of the last.

Queen Katharine in "*Henry VIII*," however, gave her opportunities of which she was quick to take advantage. It ranks among the finest of her Shakespearean impersonations. Her

> "Lord Cardinal,
> To you I speak,"

must have been worth going a long way to hear.

During the latter part of her career, she added *Hermione* in "*The Winter's Tale*" to the list, a part well suited to her declining years.

It would not be fair to conclude even a cursory review of Mrs. Siddons' stage career without referring to a spell of unpopularity through which she passed in Ireland in 1784. The trouble arose in connection with the "benefits" of two actors in her company, Brereton and Digges; but the story is far too long to repeat here. It is enough to recall that it led to her being received with hisses and cries of "Off! Off!" when she appeared at Drury Lane as *Mrs. Beverley* in "*The Gamester*" on 5th October, 1784. But she quelled the disturbance by a dignified little speech delivered at the footlights, though naturally some of the mud that had been thrown by the Press and other public critics stuck, and, it should be added, not entirely without reason. Generosity towards her brother-actors was not one of her strong points.

On 29th June, 1812, she made her public farewell,

fittingly enough in the part of *Lady Macbeth*. Never had she played it as she played it that night, if contemporary critics are to be trusted, and the most eminent among them have recorded the fact.

At the end of the play she recited her farewell verses, written for her by her nephew, Horace Twiss. As the last line was spoken, she was greeted by an ovation for which it would be hard to find a parallel in the history of the stage.

For some years afterwards she continued to give public readings of Shakespeare, in which the old genius seems to have shone forth almost as brilliantly as ever. The last days of her life were spent in seclusion at Westbourne Farm, near Paddington. She died there on 8th June, 1831.

Of Mrs. Siddons' private life there is very little to tell. For the most part it ran on in a placid stream of happy domesticity until, in March, 1808, the serenity of its waters was disturbed by the death of her husband. It was a genuine loss to her; one, as she wrote to Mrs. Piozzi, "that she would feel longer than she would speak of it."

Further tragedy followed in the death of her two elder daughters, Maria, who died in October, 1798, and Sally, who died in March, 1803. Her youngest child, Cecilia, who was nine years old when Sally died, was the only daughter to survive her. The extraordinary story of Thomas Lawrence's infatuation for both Sally and Maria in turn can only be barely mentioned here, but there is no doubt that it contributed greatly to our heroine's anxiety of mind during her latter years, and indirectly, it has been said, to her daughters' untimely end. The full story would suffice to fill a chapter by itself.

Mrs. Siddons had many friends—in the truest sense of the word. Dr. Whalley, of Bath, has already been spoken of. Among the closest of her intimates was Mrs. Piozzi, formerly Mrs. Thrale, a woman absolutely different from Mrs. Siddons in temperament. Perhaps it was this very difference that helped to bind them together.

Mrs. Inchbald, the actress (and afterwards authoress), who first made her acquaintance at Bath, was one of her devoted admirers and a life-long friend. There could be no question of rivalry between them; the one was a candle, the other a star of exceeding brilliance.

Another authoress-friend was Joanna Baillie, who wrote a drama, "*De Montfort*," which even the genius of a Siddons could not electrify into life.

The beautiful Mrs. Opie; the austere Hannah More; and the demure-eyed Annabel Milbanke, afterwards Lady Byron, are all to be reckoned among those who were more than mere acquaintances, but none of them went to the adoring lengths of Mrs. William Fitzhugh, who at one period was her veritable shadow.

Among the names of eminent men which flit across the horizon of her long career occur those of the clerical wit Sydney Smith, who made her laugh so much on their first introduction that her friends were genuinely alarmed; William Harness, vicar of All Saints, Knightsbridge; the Hon. Thomas Erskine, afterwards Lord Chancellor; Haydon the painter (and writer), who, in his autobiography, said of his first visit to her, that it was "like speaking to the mother of the Gods"; and Thomas Campbell, afterwards to become her biographer.

The story of her friendship for Mr. and Mrs. Galindo,

the former a fencing-master in Bath, brings us back to the one little foolish episode of her life, mentioned at the outset of this chapter. That it was a case of "much ado about nothing" is abundantly evident, and no one, even among her worst enemies, accepted seriously and *literatim* the allegations contained in a defamatory pamphlet published by Mrs. Galindo in 1809, under the title of: "*Mrs. Galindo's letter to Mrs. Siddons: being a circumstantial detail of Mrs. Siddons' life for the last seven years; with several of her letters.*"

Nevertheless, it seems to be so far true that the spirit of feminine vanity, which sometimes inexplicably takes root in the heart—or perhaps more accurately, head—of a woman of forty-seven, did lead her into some weak, though absolutely harmless, philandering.

But it cannot be said to detract anything from the lustre of an otherwise blameless life. Rather may it be considered to supply the one little human touch that was wanting—that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin.

CHAPTER XV

THE KEMBLES

IN spite of Mrs. Siddons' frantic efforts to bring her two younger sisters into favour with the public, Frances and Elizabeth Kemble failed to achieve success upon the boards. Had they but been content to remain in the provinces, no doubt the magic name of Kemble combined with some reflected lustre from Mrs. Siddons' triumphs in the Metropolis would have secured them a certain measure of respectful criticism, free from the bitterness of controversy. But, unfortunately, they, or Mrs. Siddons for them, could not rest satisfied with a position of semi-obscurity. To London they would go, and in London the exaggerated expectations which had been formed and the inevitable comparisons which were drawn brought them to shipwreck in a very short space of time.

The strong family likeness between the three sisters, instead of being an aid to the two younger ones, actually proved to be an additional stumbling-block. "The timbre of their voices," says Boaden, "so closely resembled Mrs. Siddons' as to vex and weary an audience hearing either of them in a play with her." Then, again, the other performers at Drury Lane, already weighed down by the all-pervading Kemble atmosphere, showed the two sisters a very decided hostility, and their supporters in and out

of the theatre took care to let that hostility be felt. The ridiculous overpraise bestowed upon them by the friends of Mrs. Siddons and the spiteful attacks made upon them by her enemies destroyed any chance they might have had of adorning the profession they had adopted. It is, however, only fair to add that neither of them possessed any great dramatic talent, and although Mrs. Siddons could and did get them engagements she could not make them good actresses.

Frances started with the advantage of great good looks. Her face and figure were beautiful, and her eyes remarkably brilliant. She was intelligent and accomplished, and, moreover, was distinguished by great sweetness of disposition. In order to improve her elocution, she attended Thomas Sheridan's elocution lectures in Hickford's Great Room, Brewer Street, although, it must be confessed, without gaining much advantage from them, and if industry and perseverance could have turned her into a good actress her success would have been assured. As it was, her first appearance as *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*" provoked such a storm of mixed criticism—one section of the Press belauding her to the skies, and the other (unfortunately the more powerful) overwhelming her with sarcastic and spiteful abuse—that the poor girl was completely bewildered.

One paper said: "Miss Kemble's attempt at *Alicia* shows that the closest alliance may be in blood without the least in genius. When any actor or actress is obliged to give up a character to make way for another, the person preferred ought to make the preference an act of strict justice, to be many degrees superior to him (or her) who is put aside." On the other hand, another critic raved about her "transcendental merits,"

and was followed by a third, who was positively annihilating. He admitted that it was "natural for Mrs. Siddons to have a wish to bring Mrs. Siddons forward ; but if she means to do it by cramming her down the throats of the public in the above character it is most likely that her fate will be similar to that of '*The Fatal Interview*,' which all Mrs. Siddons' excellence could not save from damnation. This ought to operate as a hint to her, and incline her to *desist from the attempt of finishing what the hand of Nature never began*."

These cruel attacks, which were largely the work of Mrs. Siddons' enemies, probably accounted for Frances Kemble's excessive timidity upon the stage. She would often be found bathed in tears after one or other of them, and her appearances became such an agony to her that her want of success is hardly surprising. Mrs. Siddons managed to secure her a few more engagements, but it was not long before she carried her mediocrity over to Ireland.

The persecution to which Frances Kemble was subjected whilst in London procured her at least one defender in the person of George Steevens. This strange being, as vehement in his likings as he was in his animosities, had fallen violently in love with the young actress. He constituted himself her particular champion, and through a very violent letter to the Press induced some of the critics to moderate their language. He even went to the length of depreciating Mrs. Siddons in order that Miss Kemble's reputation might be enhanced. It soon came to be understood that Steevens would propose for the hand of the young lady, and so it came about, but the family being very much opposed to the union his suit was rejected.

Mrs. Siddons, with her usual acuteness, summed up George Steevens' character to a nicety. "My sister Frances," she wrote to her friend Mr. Whalley, "is not married, and I believe there is very little reason to suppose she will be soon. In point of circumstances I believe the gentleman you mention would be a desirable husband; but I hear so much of his ill-temper and know so much of his caprice that, though my sister I believe likes him, I cannot wish her gentle spirit linked with his."

It was not long, however, before Frances Kemble was removed from a profession which had brought her nothing but mortification. Francis Twiss, the compiler in 1805 of a Shakespeare "concordance," was one of the many said to have nourished "a hopeless passion" for Mrs. Siddons. However this might be, he married her younger sister with enthusiasm, the match turning out a very happy one from every point of view, and, as Mrs. Twiss, Frances was able to retire into private life.

It is astonishing to find that even over such an event as her marriage the newspapers could not resist having a final dig at her. "The nuptials of Miss Kemble, which were to have been celebrated last Wednesday," announced one, "were postponed to this morning, when the ceremony will take place. On the former day she wept so much as to be unfit for any part except 'The Mourning Bride'!" This, though distinctly neat, cannot have afforded very exhilarating reading to Miss Kemble's family.

In 1807 Mr. and Mrs. Twiss settled down at Bath, where they kept a fashionable "seminary for young ladies" at 24 Camden Place. This establishment was largely patronized by the aristocracy, and proved so

remunerative that they were able to spend their last days in comfort.

Mrs. Twiss's niece, Charles Kemble's daughter Fanny, whose "Records of a Girlhood" form such delightful reading, and who will be described later, was sent to school at Camden Place when five years of age. According to her description, Mr. Twiss was then a "grim-visaged, gaunt-figured, kindhearted gentleman, and profound scholar"; whilst his wife "bore a soft and mitigated likeness to her celebrated sister; she had a great sweetness of voice and countenance, and a graceful, refined, feminine manner that gave her great advantages in her intercourse with and influence over the young women whose training she undertook." The three daughters of the house who assisted in teaching are described as having been extremely learned young women, who were, nevertheless, not above enjoying the balls, routs, and assemblies of the fashionable watering-place, and who, in spite of being schoolmistresses, were quite leaders of "the *ton*."

Then there was John Twiss, one of the sons, who was studying to become an engineer officer, and whose visits to his home in the holidays were exciting events. His niece describes how he used to inspire her with a kind of delighted terror by enacting his Uncle John's famous rescue of *Cora's* child in "*Pizarro*." He would seize little Fanny in one hand, and, flinging her up into "perilous proximity" with the chandelier, rush wildly about the drawing-room.

This son John became a major-general in the army in 1864, and was governor of the Royal Military College, Woolwich.

The elder son, Horace, destined to become more

famous than his father, inherited the love of the stage of his mother's family. He wrote, as we have seen, an address for his aunt, Mrs. Siddons, who recited it at her practical farewell to the stage on 29th June, 1812. He also assisted her when she gave her readings from Shakespeare, was a brilliant wit, and sang with spirit and expression. In 1820 he was returned to Parliament for the borough of Wootton Bassett, in Wiltshire, and in 1827 became a King's counsel.

The gentle mother of these distinguished young people died at Bath in 1822, her husband surviving her some five years. There is a celebrated half-length portrait of her by Sir Joshua Reynolds, painted in 1783, and exhibited at Burlington House in 1890. It was sold by Christie's in 1891 among the pictures belonging to the Right Hon. G. A. F. Cavendish-Bentinck, and fetched 2640 guineas.

Elizabeth Kemble, the third daughter of old Roger Kemble, was, in this country at any rate, almost as great a failure upon the stage as her sister Frances. Coming up to London at the same time, she made her first appearance at Drury Lane about six weeks later, namely, on 22nd February, 1783, when she played *Portia*, a part she repeated on March 1st. She remained at Drury Lane for two seasons, bolstered up by Mrs. Siddons, the parts she secured including those of *Margaret* in "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*," *Imogen*, *Leonora* in "*The Revenge*," *Elvira* in "*Love Makes a Man*," *Lucia* in "*Cato*," *Lady Touchwood* in "*The Double Dealer*," and *Mrs. Marwood* in "*The Way of the World*."

Boaden's description of Elizabeth Kemble is meant to be kind, but is nevertheless ironical. "This lady," he says, "through her private studies, became a very

striking ornament of her distinguished family." It would perhaps have been more to the point if she had proved an ornament to the profession she had adopted !

At the end of her two seasons at Drury Lane, Elizabeth went to York, where she married Charles Edward Whitlock, one of the managers of the Newcastle, Sunderland, Lancaster, and Chester theatres. She was, however, determined not to give up a theatrical career, and finding that success within the same country as that occupied by her eldest sister was a sheer impossibility, she went off to America with her husband and made quite a name for herself there. Her efforts on the other side of the ocean were so much appreciated, indeed, that she managed to amass a considerable fortune.

In 1807 she returned to London and reappeared at Drury Lane, her reported triumphs in America bringing together a large audience. She was evidently not much more successful than before, for there is no record of further appearances on the stage, and she seems to have retired altogether about this time.

Elizabeth Whitlock had the best voice in the Kemble family, although she had an unpleasant trick of droping it towards the close of a sentence. Her action was statuesque, but she was lacking in animation. She looked like a clumsy, badly finished imitation of Mrs. Siddons. "Her vehement gestures and violent objurgations," says the writer of "Records of a Girlhood," "contrasted comically with her sister's majestic stillness of manner; and when, occasionally, Mrs. Siddons would interrupt her with, 'Elizabeth, your wig is on one side,' and the other replied, 'Oh, is it ?' and, giving the offending headgear a shove to put it quite as crooked in the other direction, proceeded

with her discourse, Melpomene herself used to have recourse to her snuff-box to hide the dawning smile on her face."

Mrs. Whitlock's husband died long before she did, and the widow moved to and fro between the various family households. When the Charles Kembles were living at Craven Hill, she took up her abode with them for a while. Her niece Fanny, to whose vivid pen we owe so many humorous descriptions of the various members of the family circle, describes her thus: "She was a very worthy but exceedingly ridiculous woman, in whom the strong peculiarities of her family were so exaggerated that she really seemed like a living parody or caricature of all the Kembles. She was a larger and taller woman than Mrs. Siddons, and had a fine commanding figure at the time I am speaking of, when she was quite an elderly person. She was like her brother Stephen in face, with handsome features, too large and strongly marked for a woman, light grey eyes, and a light auburn wig, which, I presume, represented the colour of her previous hair, and which, together with the tall cap that surmounted it, was always more or less on one side. She had the deep sonorous voice and extremely distinct utterance of her family, and an extraordinary vehemence of gesture and expression quite unlike their quiet dignity of manner, and which made her conversation like that of people in old plays and novels; for she would slap her thigh in emphatic enforcement of her statements (which were apt to be upon an incredibly large scale), not unfrequently prefacing them with the exclamation—'I declare to God!' or 'I wish I may die!'—all which seemed to us very extraordinary, and, combined with her large size and

loud voice, used occasionally to cause us some dismay. . . . But she was a simple-hearted, sweet-tempered woman, whose harmless peculiarities did not prevent us all being fond of her."

This picture of Elizabeth Whitlock in advancing age gives us a very good idea of the good-tempered although somewhat excitable person she must have been in her youth, of which little is recorded owing to the over-shadowing presence of Mrs. Siddons. She had a great taste for drawing, and spent much time in her latter days teaching her nephews and nieces such old-fashioned card games as Quadrille, and regaling them with anecdotes about her experiences in America. She had been presented to George Washington, and had met and talked to Talleyrand, and had, besides, stories to tell of Red Indians, who at that time might still be found occasionally in the streets of Philadelphia; small wonder that, in spite of occasional alarming eccentricities, she was much beloved by the younger generation!

The last years of her life were spent in a rural cottage at Addlestone, in Surrey, where she lived in simple content, bequeathing at her death, in 1836, the whole of her small property to Mrs. Charles Kemble (the mother of Fanny Kemble), who spent the last two years of her life (and died) there.

There was another sister of Mrs. Siddons, a Mrs. Curtis, who disgraced herself by becoming connected with a certain notorious Dr. Graham, who exploited a "Temple of Health" with earth-baths—and who knows what other ridiculous quackeries? Yet another sister, Jane, married a Mr. Mason, of Edinburgh. Jane first appeared upon the stage at Newcastle when only nineteen. In 1814, after Mrs. Siddons' retirement,

she obtained an engagement at the Haymarket. "Her short, very short, and lusty figure," said a critic, "had a ludicrous effect." The part she played was that of *Lady Randolph*, and when a character in the play describing her death announced that "she ran, she flew, like lightning up the hill," the audience roared with laughter. She was not a good actress, having all the Kemble blemishes of prolonged pauses and over-study, and none of the genius which was able to triumph in spite of them. She died in 1834, leaving a husband and five sons and a daughter, "all on the stage," according to the obituary notices. Certainly, the stage, by nearly all the children and grandchildren of Roger Kemble, seems to have been regarded as their inevitable goal, whether they had talent or not.

Mrs. Siddons was a generous sister, and lent money from time to time, which was often not repaid. As is so often the case in like circumstances, these loans became the source of many small bitternesses. "Alas!" exclaimed Mrs. Siddons pathetically, "after I became celebrated none of my sisters loved me as before"—the real truth, of course, being that celebrity having brought money with it, the other members of the family were constantly putting themselves under an obligation, a sensation which proved irksome and produced friction. These little differences, however, were never of long duration, and in the main the Kembles were a very united family.

Mrs. John Kemble, who could boast for a time that she was the oldest member of Garrick's Company, and could add later that she was the only one surviving, was the daughter of Hopkins, for many years prompter at Drury Lane. Her mother was a respectable actress

in Garrick's Company, and an elder sister also belonged to it. Priscilla Hopkins, who was, much later, to win the prize husband among the Kemble brothers, was, as we are told by Genest, "pretty, but not very capable" as an actress. She appeared as a member of the company at Drury Lane in 1775, playing in an adaptation of "*Eastward Ho!*", and also in "*The Clandestine Marriage*" and "*Maid of The Oaks.*" In 1776 she was the original *Harriet* in Mrs. Cowley's "*Runaway,*" and the original *Eliza* in Colman's "*Spleen, or Islington Spa*"; she was the original *Maria* in "*The School for Scandal*" in 1777, and played a number of parts more or less important.

About this time she married Brereton, the actor, for in 1778 she was playing at Drury Lane as "Mrs. Brereton, late Miss P. Hopkins." Her married life was quiet and respectable, and she continued to play for a great number of years at Drury Lane, satisfactorily occupying a most necessary and useful, if secondary, position.

In 1785 Brereton went to Dublin, and whilst there attempted to commit suicide—out of passionate love for Mrs. Siddons, it was freely hinted at the time. He made a partial recovery, but was kept in charge at Hoxton. He died on 17th February, 1787, and was buried in Shoreditch churchyard. His widow does not seem to have mourned him very heavily, for on the 12th of March following she appeared at Drury Lane as the original *Emily* in Holcroft's "*Seduction.*"

It was not long before she became aware that John Kemble, who was looking around for a nice useful wife who would help him on in his profession, was beginning to cast his eyes in her direction. Soon his attentions began to be really noticeable, and others

besides herself were able to guess what was in the wind. "My dear mother," said Priscilla one day with apparent innocence, "I cannot guess what Mr. Kemble means; he passed me just now, going up to his dressing-room, and chucking me under the chin, said, 'Ha, Pop! I should not wonder if you were soon to hear something very much to your advantage!' What could he mean?" "Mean!" replied the sensible mother; "why, he means to propose marriage; and if he does, I advise you not to refuse him." Mrs. Brereton, not being a fool, didn't, and the marriage was solemnized on 8th December, 1787.

Mrs. John Kemble continued to play at Drury Lane until 1796, but her position as the wife of John Kemble did not prove to be of any assistance in her profession. She was given no important parts, and even those in which she had succeeded previously were withheld from her. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that she tired of this subordinate position, and on 23rd May, 1796, made her last appearance upon the stage, when she played the part of *Flavia* in her husband's "*Celadon and Florimel*," and delivered an address.

Kemble's marriage to the widow of Brereton aroused much comment at the time. It was felt that the great actor ought to have done better for himself socially. As it turned out, however, his choice was amply justified. His wife was an intelligent, agreeable woman, well able to hold her own in society, where, indeed, after her retirement she became a great favourite. "She was quick, keen, clever, and shrewd, with the air, manner, dress, and address of a finished woman of the world," is Fanny Kemble's description of her; and again: "The names of lords and ladies were familiar in her mouth as household words, and she had

undoubtedly an undue respect for respectability and reverence for titled folk; yet she was not at all superficially a vulgar woman." All this was of great service to Kemble, for his wife's position in society kept him constantly in remembrance. When he went abroad, soon after taking a share of the patent at Covent Garden, his wife was left to pay a round of visits amongst her aristocratic friends, a notable stay being made at Stanmore Priory with the Marquis and Marchioness of Abercorn. "Lady Abercorn," she wrote to her friend Mrs. Inchbald, "sits with me an hour in the evening. Upon my honour, she treats me with the affectionate kindness of a sister." At the end of a long letter to her friend, in which she describes a grand entertainment at Stanmore at which the Prince of Wales, the Duke and Duchess of Devonshire, the Castlereaghs, and a host of other titled folk were present, she adds a sentence that shows how well Kemble knew what he was about when he married her. "I think," she says, "the houses I have been in during my husband's absence have been most creditable and serviceable to him, as he has been constantly kept before the great world, and passages in his letters talked of."

Mrs. Kemble accompanied her husband abroad after his retirement, and upon his death at Lausanne returned to England and took up her residence at a charming place called Heath Farm in Hertfordshire; this home was offered to her by Lord Essex, who had been a devoted friend of her husband's. Mrs. Whitlock came to live with her for a time, and it was intended that the arrangement should be permanent, but the two temperaments proving antagonistic the idea was abandoned. Poor kind-hearted Mrs. Whitlock had never

lived in any English society to speak of, and her reminiscences of Washington and Talleyrand failed to interest her sister-in-law, who would have preferred her to have been posted up in the fashionable gossip of the day. Moreover, her manner was so odd and her appearance so grotesque that her presence was a regular thorn in the flesh whenever a smart caller arrived. On the approach to the house of a coroneted carriage, Mrs. Kemble, hoping that her sister-in-law would take the hint and make herself scarce, would observe pointedly, "Mrs. Whitlock, there is an *ekkipage*" (smart society pronounced the word thus in those days).

"I see it, ma'am," Mrs. Whitlock would reply, screwing up her mouth and twirling her thumbs as was her wont in moments of crisis.

Mrs. Kemble would then jump up, ring the bell, and snap out at the servant, "Not at home!"—denying herself a pleasant hour of gossip, and her companion what the latter would have called a little "genteel sociability," rather than that her fine friends should come face to face with Mrs. Whitlock's flounced white muslin apron and towering cap.

This kind of thing could obviously not be repeated indefinitely, and the partnership was dissolved. Mrs. Whitlock betook herself to Surrey, whilst Mrs. Kemble, who found the country intolerably dull and used to declare that the sight of the grass and the trees made her sick, took up her abode at Leamington, where she found plenty of congenial society. She lived to the great age of ninety, dying in 1845, whilst still in the full possession of her faculties. Having no children, she left the whole of her property to the Kemble and Siddons families.

Mrs. Stephen Kemble seems to have possessed something very near to genius. Tate Wilkinson used to declare that, with the exception of Mrs. Cibber, she was the very best *Ophelia* he ever saw. She certainly eclipsed her husband on every occasion on which they played together, although, as Stephen was more painstaking than gifted, this is perhaps not very high praise. Her particular line was rustic simplicity, her naturalness and innocence of expression making her the most perfect *Polly* since the days of Lavinia Fenton.

As Miss Satchell, Stephen Kemble's wife had made her first appearance upon the stage in 1780 at Covent Garden as *Polly*, following this up with *Patty* in "*The Maid of the Mill.*" She achieved such instantaneous popularity that she was in the following season promoted to such parts as *Margaret* in "*A New Way to Pay Old Debts*," *Juliet*, *Ophelia*, and *Celia* in "*As You Like It.*" In 1783 she began to play leading business, appearing as *Desdemona* to the *Othello* of Stephen Kemble, *Indiana* in "*The Conscious Lovers*," to his *Sealand*, and *Salima* to his *Bajazet* in "*Tamerlane.*" Shortly afterwards she married him and to the regret of her many admirers accompanied him to Durham, when he became manager and shareholder of the theatre there. His company migrated from place to place at certain seasons, but Mrs. Stephen Kemble often appeared in London, being the first *Yarico* in the younger Colman's "*Inkle and Yarico*" at the Haymarket in 1787, and the first *Harriet* in "*Ways and Means*" in 1788.

Boaden says of her: "The stage in my time never exhibited so interesting a candidate as Miss Satchell. . . . No one ever, like her, presented the charm of

unsuspecting fondness or that rustic simplicity which, removed immeasurably from vulgarity, betrays nothing of the world's refinement." A writer in "Blackwood's Magazine" in 1832 declared that "although not so lovely as Miss O'Neill, nor so romantic, her eyes had far more of that unconsciously alluring expression of innocence and voluptuousness."

In spite of her gentle expression, however, Mrs. Stephen Kemble had a hot temper which occasionally showed itself upon the stage. It is said that on one occasion she almost bit a piece out of the shoulder of Henry Erskine Johnston! Liston, the famous comedian, who had a habit of letting off farcical jokes in the midst of the most serious performances, used to try her temper sorely. Once, when she was standing in the wings ready to go on as the mad *Ophelia*, Liston put into her hand a basket containing, not the conventional flowers and straws of the stage maniac, but carrots, onions, turnips, leeks and pot-herbs! The fair *Ophelia* staggered on to the stage with such a grin of combined rage and laughter on her face that the audience thought her madness had never been better done, and applauded vociferously.

On another occasion, Liston, having painted her little daughter's face like a clown's, posted the child at one of the side doors to the stage, so that she might confront her mother when she appeared at the opposite side to make her entrance. The poor woman, who was about to take part in a scene of great pathos, no sooner clapped her eyes on the grotesque little apparition in front of her, than she fell into convulsions of laughter. "Go away, Fanny!" she gasped in an audible whisper. "Go away! I'll tell your father, miss!" History does not relate

what she said to Liston afterwards; perhaps she thought it useless to get into a temper with the man who had once in the lugubrious funeral procession in "*Romeo and Juliet*" sent all the little chorister boys on with pieces of brown paper in their hands to wipe their eyes with!

Mrs. Stephen Kemble spent the closing years of her life in retirement at The Grove, near Durham. She outlived her husband nineteen years, and when she died, in 1841, she was buried beside him in Durham Cathedral.

Charles Kemble, less gifted than John, but more so than Stephen, was as fortunate in his choice of a wife as his brothers. He married Miss Maria Theresa De Camp, an excellent actress. She was the daughter of a French officer, whose real name is alleged to have been Fleury. This gentleman went to Vienna soon after his marriage and it was there that his daughter was born on January 17th, 1774.

In an evil hour De Camp was persuaded to leave Vienna and come to London. His friends thought that as he was a clever draughtsman and a fair musician, he would easily be able by the exercise of these talents to maintain himself and his wife and child. It was a time when London was overflowing with French emigrants, for whom the Londoners had a profound sympathy and for whom they were constantly getting up charitable entertainments. Amongst these were some representations of Berquin's and Madame de Genlis' juvenile dramas, given by French children under the direction of Le Texier. The child who attracted the most attention was Maria Theresa De Camp, whose beauty and

grace, spirited acting and sparkling vivacity so delighted the fine ladies and gentlemen who patronized the performances that for a time she was in a fair way to becoming irretrievably spoiled. She was treated as a pet and plaything by persons of the very highest rank, not excluding the Prince of Wales and the Prince Regent, whose favourite joke it was to place the little girl, when she came to visit Mrs. Fitzherbert, under a huge bell-glass made to cover some large group of Dresden china, where her tiny figure and dainty fairy-like face gave the impression of some costly work of art.

Meantime, whilst their child was being exalted in the seats of the mighty, the poor parents were having a terrible fight with poverty and disease. Captain De Camp had at first managed to earn a competency by giving lessons in flute-playing. His chest, however, always weak, soon began to suffer from the vagaries of our climate. The foggy smoke-laden atmosphere affected his lungs; the flute had to be given up, and after a fruitless attempt to earn a living by teaching drawing, he was obliged to go once more abroad, leaving his little daughter in England. He died of consumption not long afterwards, leaving a widow and five children, of whom Maria Theresa was the eldest, and, from henceforth, the breadwinner of the family. Her father having taught her no English, she now began to study it assiduously under the kindly tutelage of Viscountess Perceval, whilst she was taught music and Italian by a Miss Buchanan. In the meantime she had several engagements for juvenile parts at both Drury Lane and the Haymarket, and so managed to help her mother to make both ends meet.

Her first great hit was made at the Haymarket, in 1792, in "*The Beggar's Opera*," when she performed *Macheath* to the *Polly* of Bannister, and the *Lucy* of Johnston, in one of the fantastic experiments of changing the sex of the exponents, practised at that theatre. This was followed by *Biddy* in "*Miss in Her Teens*," *Adelaide* in "*Count of Narbonne*," *Lucy* in "*The Recruiting Officer*," and some original parts, including *Lindamira* in Cumberland's "*Box Lobby Challenge*." In singing parts she was allowed to replace Signora Storace and Mrs. Crouch. She was now fully launched upon a very successful career. One critic describes her as having been at this time "a delightful dark-haired girl, whose motion was itself music ere her voice was heard." Fitzgerald says that Miss Maria Theresa De Camp, "with her foreign piquancy and grace, suggests a general resemblance to that Eva Maria Violette, who became Mrs. Garrick."

In 1799, for her "benefit," she gave at Drury Lane her own unprinted play of "*First Faults*." In the same year William Earle, jun., printed a feeble piece called "*Natural Faults*," and accused Miss De Camp of having stolen his plot and characters. In a letter to the "Morning Post," she indignantly denied this charge, stating that until that date she had never heard of the man or seen his manuscript.

Her marriage to Charles Kemble took place on the 2nd July, 1806, after which she accompanied the Kembles to Covent Garden, appearing there on October 1st as *Maria* in "*The Citizen*," and remaining there for the rest of her career. Her pretty little comedy, "*The Day After the Wedding*," was played at Covent Garden for the "benefit" of her husband, who acted *Colonel Freelove*, on 18th May, 1808. She took

the part of *Elizabeth Freelove*, a rôle in which she appeared at her very best. Her appearances from this time onwards became infrequent, her "farewell" performance taking place on 9th June, 1819, as *Julia* in "*Personation.*" In 1829, however, she made a solitary reappearance on the occasion of her daughter Fanny's début, when she played *Lady Capulet* to the latter's *Juliet.*

Mrs. Charles Kemble was a shrewd critic and an acknowledged authority on all matters connected with the stage. She had a wide knowledge of art, a quickness of perception and a brilliancy of expression that made her a delightful conversationalist. She had a fine and powerful voice, and an accurate ear. She had indefatigable industry, and, during the years she remained on the stage, "almost lived" at the particular theatre to which she was attached. She could easily have secured engagements longer than she did had it not been for a foolish desire to play in young parts, for which her advancing years made her unfitted. It seems an odd weakness in a woman of so much common sense and of so much critical faculty, but there it was—she would not confine herself to the *Mrs. Oakleys* and *Mrs. Candours* of the stage, and wished to continue to display her now very fat figure in youthful parts of more romantic although not more important character.

Among her best parts in her heyday were chambermaids, in which she was admirable; *Mrs. Oakley*, *Lucy Lockit*, *Bisarre*, *Mrs. Sullen*, *Caroline* in "*The Prize*," *Lady Elizabeth Freelove* and *Edmund* in "*The Blind Boy.*" She also originated quite a number of parts, notably that of *Madge Wildfire* in Terry's musical version of "*The Heart of Midlothian.*"

In her youth Mrs. Charles Kemble had a *naïveté* that was one of her greatest charms, although it sometimes led her into unconscious irony. Planché tells a story of how she startled that clever actor, John Harley, on one occasion. In 1819 an Easter piece, founded on one of the "Tales of the Genii," and called "*Abudah, or the Talisman of Oromanes*," was put on at Drury Lane. The ballads sung in it were by Michael Kelly (cruelly named "Composer of wines, and Importer of music!"), and during rehearsal one young lady sang so woefully out of tune that Kelly, cowering in a box behind the curtain which hung in front of it in the daytime, actually groaned aloud. The piece was a miserably poor one, and what with bad stage-management and the inclusion in the cast of one or two wretched performers, it was a pretty bad failure, despite the frantic exertions of Harley and the sweet singing of Mrs. Bland.

Shortly after this Mrs. Charles Kemble, who was engaged at the rival house, met Harley in the street, and at once exclaimed, "Oh, Mr. Harley, how much we wish you were at Covent Garden!" Harley bowed his acknowledgment of this tribute to his talent, but unfortunately the lady added—"to play a bad part in an Easter piece," which somewhat spoiled the effect of the compliment. As a matter of fact, the remark was very much to the point, for Harley was noted for his ability to pull a bad piece through by his tact, humour, and personal popularity.

During her latter years Mrs. Charles Kemble spent a good deal of time in the country, chiefly at Weybridge, where Charles Kemble had taken a cottage. She was passionately fond of country pursuits, and of fishing in particular, spending whole days by the river

in fair weather or foul, almost equally happy whether she caught anything or not. She had a detestation of London, its smoke and fog irritating her nerves and oppressing her spirits to an extraordinary degree. When in London she had a mania for altering the arrangement of the furniture, I suppose in order to work off her restlessness. "Our furniture played an everlasting game of puss-in-the-corner," says her daughter Fanny, and proceeds to tell us how they never knew when they would find the rooms a perfect chaos of disorder, with every chair, table, and sofa "dancing the hayes" in horrid confusion, whilst her mother, crimson and dishevelled, was pulling and pushing them hither and thither, breathlessly organizing new combinations.

An affected woman, with a passion for dress, once said to Mrs. Kemble, "What do you do when you have a headache, or are bilious, or cross, or nervous, or out of spirits? I always change my dress; it does me so much good!"

"Oh!" said Mrs. Kemble briskly, "I change my furniture."

Mrs. Charles Kemble died in 1838, and was survived by her husband until 1854. Of her two daughters, Frances, the elder, married Mr. Pierce Butler, of Philadelphia, and was the authoress of "Records of a Girlhood," and the other, Adelaide, became a singer of some repute, and married Mr. Sartoris.

Frances, or Fanny Kemble, to give her the name by which she is best remembered, was born in London in 1809. She was a most interesting child, and showed a marked individuality from her very earliest days. She herself tells us that she was very troublesome and unmanageable, with a contempt for authority coupled

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with a cheerful indifference to punishment that made her the despair of her elders. On one occasion, having been adorned by a "fool's cap" as a symbol of disgrace on account of some more than usually mischievous display of devilment, she took the earliest opportunity of dancing down the drive to meet her friend the postman in order to secure his admiration of her "helmet"! Needless to say this particular form of punishment was not repeated. The infliction of a bread-and-water diet was next tried, but the imp only accepted it joyfully, remarking, "Now I am like those poor dear French prisoners that everybody pities so." An intimate friend of Mrs. Siddons' being implored to come to the rescue, thought she would raise the whole matter to a higher plane, but failed signally in her experiment.

"Fanny," she asked in a solemn voice, "why don't you pray to God to make you better?"

"So I do," replied the incorrigible one, "and He makes me worse and worse."

It is perhaps hardly to be wondered at that Fanny, at the early age of five, was sent to her Aunt Twiss at Bath, where she remained for a year. A fall over the banisters just before she left is the event chiefly remembered afterwards, but no doubt the gentle Frances Twiss did make a good deal of impression upon the budding mind of her little namesake. At the age of seven she was sent to Boulogne to school, her father being extremely anxious to give her every advantage he could. Here she learned music, dancing, and Italian, and here she indulged in many graceless episodes that caused the hair of poor Madame Faudier, her schoolmistress, to stand on end. Being once informed by some terrified passers-by that one of her

"demoiselles" was perambulating the roof, she at once exclaimed, "Ah, ce ne peut-être que cette *diable* de Kemble!" And so, of course, it turned out to be. The child having been shut up in a lonely garret to expiate one of her almost daily offences, had sought refuge from boredom by climbing up through a trap-door on to the roof, and was gleefully surveying the extensive view without a thought of danger or offence. However, in spite of all this, Fanny, who was a remarkably clever child, managed to carry off the lion's share of the prizes after the yearly examinations.

She remained at Boulogne until she was nine, and spent two years at home before being sent to school in Paris. During her three years at this school her taste for reading became strongly developed. Corneille, Racine, Victor Hugo she devoured omnivorously. She slept with a copy of Lord Byron's poems beneath her pillow in defiance of all rules and regulations—this was promptly discovered and the book confiscated—and she revelled in the novels of Sir Walter Scott; all was fish that came to her net in the way of reading apparently, not only during these latter school days, but long after she had returned to England, when she had a wider choice owing to having no supervision. When she was seventeen or eighteen she began writing. She had at this time a great disinclination to society, and spent most of her time in literary pursuits. For theatrical life she had a positive aversion, although not for *acting* itself. She would never have turned her thoughts towards the stage as a profession had it not been for her father's ever-increasing financial troubles.

When John Kemble left the stage he made over his share of Covent Garden to his brother Charles as a free

gift. This turned out to be a disastrous legacy: the house seemed doomed to failure from the beginning. Charles Kemble was neither a judicious nor a fortunate manager; costly pageants and revivals ate up all the profits; the accounts were plunged into hopeless confusion; the proprietors became involved in a law-suit. By 1829 affairs had reached such a pitch that the bailiffs were actually put in possession, and inevitable ruin seemed to stare the hapless lessee in the face. It was at this point that Fanny stepped into the breach. In three weeks she prepared herself to play the part of *Juliet*.

As soon as it became known that another Kemble was to come forward upon the stage the theatrical world was all agog with excitement. Puffs were published in the newspapers beforehand, the most exaggerated promises were made—she was to be the greatest wonder of the age, out-rivalling Mrs. Siddons; she would prove a gold mine, would put all contemporaries into the shade, and so on and so forth. What wonder the poor trembling débutante had scarce enough courage in her legs to get her on the stage at all? Her mother, who was to play *Lady Capulet*, had driven her to the theatre whilst the autumn sunlight still lingered in the sky, and pointing to it, had said: "Heaven smiles on you, my child!" And yet here sat poor *Juliet* in her dressing-room, with her satin train laid carefully over the back of her chair, pressing her palms convulsively together whilst the tears rolled down her rouged cheeks.

"Courage, courage, dear child! Poor thing, poor thing!" reiterated Mrs. Davenport, who was to play the *Nurse*.

"Never mind 'em, Miss Kemble!" urged Keeley.

"Never mind 'em! Don't think of 'em any more than if they were so many rows of cabbages!"

All this time the father and mother had disappeared from view, unable to bear the scene. At last, however, Mrs. Kemble called from the stage "Nurse," and Mrs. Davenport "waddled" on, and in her turn called "Juliet." Poor Fanny was literally pushed on to the stage, and getting hold of her mother, stood like some terrified animal at bay, staring at the audience. During the first scene her voice was scarcely audible; in the next, the ball-room, things went better, but when the balcony scene was reached she suddenly cast aside her terror, and forgetting everything but the beauty of her lines, she gave a performance exceeding in merit the wildest hopes of her supporters. When all was over she was greeted with thunders of applause, and amidst the tears, embraces, and congratulations of her family, was carried off home in triumph.

After that she played a whole round of characters—*The Grecian Daughter*, *Belvidera*, *Isabella*, *Portia*—etc. etc., with considerable success. She drew such over-flowing houses that during the one season Charles Kemble was able to pay off £13,000 of debt. For several consecutive seasons she continued to play at Covent Garden. She was the original *Julia* in "*The Hunchback*," by Sheridan Knowles, her father playing *Sir Thomas Clifford*. Her spell of popularity was, however, short-lived. She had no real genius and no deep sympathy with her art. After some tours in the provinces with her father, they both sailed to America in 1832. Their success in the United States was both artistic and social, although Fanny Kemble hints in her book that their style was too tame for New York.

In 1834 she married Mr. Pierce Butler in Philadelphia,

but later obtained a divorce. She resumed her maiden name and lived at Lenox, Massachusetts, returning to Europe at intervals. In 1848 she started giving Shakespearean readings in Boston, followed by readings in other cities. In these she was very successful; in fact, from this time onward she was known as a Shakespearean reader and authoress rather than as an actress. Of her books the most successful were her "Journal of a Residence in America" (1835), her "Records of a Girlhood" (1878), "Notes upon some of Shakespeare's Plays" (1882), "Records of Later Life" (1882) and "Life on a Georgian Plantation" (1863). She died in 1893.

Mrs. Charles Kemble's younger daughter, Adelaide, had a short but artistically successful career as an opera singer. Her voice was not powerful but of excellent quality, until it was spoiled by her effort to extend its compass. Her first appearance at Covent Garden was in 1841 in an English version of *Norma*, and after thrilling her audiences for two years in the works of Rossini and Bellini, she married Mr. Sartoris and retired into private life. She and her husband spent much of their time in Italy, their house being considered one of the pleasantest in Rome, and she died in 1879 at Warsash in Hampshire, at the age of sixty-five.

CHAPTER XVI

MISS O'NEILL

ELIZA O'NEILL may be said to have been the last of a long line of tragic actresses. When she first appeared in London, at Covent Garden, in 1814, playgoers, still mourning the retirement of Mrs. Siddons and despairing of ever seeing her like during their life-time, plucked up fresh heart. Here, surely, was a worthy successor after all! An actress, young, beautiful, full of fire and passion, who played the old stock parts—*Juliet*, *Belvidera*, *Isabella*—to an ever-rising accompaniment of popular enthusiasm and applause, what wonder that some of the people who had been loudest in their expressions of grief over the loss to the stage of one of the greatest tragic actresses the world has ever seen temporarily lost their heads and were swept along on the tide of a great reaction? Comparisons were inevitably drawn, and although these never went to such ridiculous lengths as to be unfavourable to Mrs. Siddons, there were plenty of critics who were prepared to place Miss O'Neill in a position of equal rank.

Time, however, soon falsified these exaggerated expectations. At no period of her short career did Miss O'Neill do more than equal the *early* efforts of her great predecessor. She had passion, dignity and power, and with them an extreme sensibility and

pathos that melted audiences to tears, but in imagination, in intellect, in majesty, she was vastly inferior to Mrs. Siddons ; the fact that she was ever compared to that supreme genius at all is perhaps the most convincing evidence that has been handed down to us of her undoubted ability.

Born in 1791, Eliza O'Neill was the daughter of an actor who was manager of the Drogheda theatre. When she was but twelve years old her father introduced her on the boards of his own theatre, her first part being that of the *Duke of York* in "*Richard III.*" Afterwards she played quite a number of small parts in her father's company with great success. Soon she attracted the attention of Mr. Talbot, manager of the Belfast theatre. He was so enchanted by her acting that he persuaded her father to allow her to enlist in his company, and accordingly the talented girl proceeded to Belfast, where she advanced rapidly in her profession and played several first-rate characters in both comedy and tragedy.

In Michael Kelly's delightful "Reminiscences" we find an account of the next and more important step forward in her career. He tells us that Miss Walstein, who was the star of the Dublin stage in 1811 and a great and deserved favourite, was to open the Crow Street Theatre in the character of *Juliet*. At the last moment, however, that charming actress sent an intimation to Mr. Jones, the manager, that unless he gave her an increase of salary and certain other privileges she would not come to the house. Mr. Jones had arrived at the determination to shut up his theatre rather than submit to what he considered an unwarrantable demand, when MacNally, the box-keeper, who had been the bearer of Miss Walstein's

message, told Mr. Jones that it would be a pity to close the house, and that there was a remedy if Mr. Jones chose to avail himself of it. "The girl, sir," said he, "who has been so often strongly recommended to you as a promising actress, is now at an hotel in Dublin with her father and brother, where they have just arrived, and is proceeding to Drogheda to act at her father's theatre there. I have heard it said by persons who have seen her, that she plays *Juliet* extremely well, and is very young and pretty. I am sure she would be delighted to have the opportunity of appearing before a Dublin audience, and, if you please, I will make the proposal."

The proposal was made and accepted. Eliza O'Neill, instead of returning to comparative obscurity in the provinces, was given her great chance at the age of twenty of making her reputation upon the stage that was scarcely less distinguished than that of London itself.

Her *Juliet* was an instantaneous success. Her youth and beauty, combined with her naturalness and simplicity, made her an ideal representative of the part. The audience was aroused to wild enthusiasm, and Mr. Jones was so elated that he promptly extended his patronage to her father and brother also, and offered them engagements on very liberal terms. "*Juliet*" had to be repeated on several nights. An amusing anecdote is told in connection with one of these performances. When Conway, who was playing *Romeo*, came to the lines

> "Oh! that I were a glove upon that hand,
> That I might touch that cheek!"

the actor, being very tall, and the stage particularly low, laid his hand upon the balcony. Some one in the

gallery perceiving the absurdity of this, immediately yelled out: "Get out wid your blarney; why don't you touch her then, and not be praching Parson Saxe there?"

Miss O'Neill remained in Dublin for three years, her popularity steadily increasing with each year that passed. Her *Jane Shore* was almost as much admired as her *Juliet*, and was considered to be superior to that of Miss Walstein, who, however, held her own in *Lady Townly* and *Lady Teazle*.

In 1814 Miss O'Neill crossed the Channel and appeared in London. The glowing accounts of her success in *Juliet* had by this time reached the ears of the manager of Covent Garden. Having first offered to engage Miss Walstein upon higher terms than were subsequently offered Miss O'Neill, and having had that offer refused, the manager was induced to engage the latter. He never had occasion to regret the exchange. The young actress soon filled his house to overflowing. Her success exceeded his wildest hopes. Her *Juliet*, the part in which she made her début in London, as in Dublin, took the town by storm. Her *Belvidera* and her *Isabella* followed, and wrung the hearts of both men and women to the point of tears. We are even told that strong men were borne fainting from the theatre after witnessing one of her tragic performances. The reaction hinted at in the first paragraph of this chapter had doubtless something to do with the hysterical fervour with which the young actress was received, but that she had very real merit and possessed gifts which raised her high above mediocrity is established beyond question. But for the injudiciousness of her admirers her name would doubtless have been handed down to posterity with a brighter lustre surrounding it than has actually been the case.

Macready, speaking of her début, says: "Her beauty, grace, simplicity and tenderness were the theme of every tongue. The noble pathos of Siddons' transcendent genius no longer served as the grand commentary and living exponent of Shakespeare's text, but in the native elegance, the feminine sweetness, the unaffected earnestness and gushing passion of Miss O'Neill, the stage had received a worthy successor to her." It is only fair to add that from this estimate of Miss O'Neill Macready never receded.

Hazlitt's praise was also warm, if more discriminating. He says: "Her excellence—unrivalled by any actress since Mrs. Siddons—consisted in truth of nature and force of passion."

In the criticism of Reynolds, the dramatist, there is a note of disparagement, but in this he seems to have stood alone. "This young lady," he says, "in addition to a very pleasing person and a good voice, possessed no doubt a considerable portion of feeling, but which, in my opinion, was of too boisterous and vehement a nature. In this judgment I am in a minority, for by the verdict of the million Miss O'Neill was pronounced a younger and better Mrs. Siddons."

One unnamed critic, in drawing a comparison between the young tragedienne and her great predecessor, sums up the difference between the two in a very subtle but apt manner.

"It is not easy," he says of Miss O'Neill, "to convey an idea of an actress who has no peculiar *defects* and whose *excellence* is nearly uniform. She is by far the most impressive actress we have seen since Mrs. Siddons; nor do we think that the expression of domestic and feminine distress can well be carried further. As she has been compared (and with some

appearance of reason) with Mrs. Siddons, we shall attempt to describe the difference between them. This is scarcely greater in the form, features, and tone of voice than in the expression of the internal workings of the mind. In Mrs. Siddons, passion was combined with lofty *imagination* and *commanding intellect;* Miss O'Neill owes everything to extreme sensibility. In her *Belvidera* and *Isabella* we see the natural feelings of tenderness and grief worked up to madness by accumulated misfortunes. She gives herself up entirely to the impression of circumstances, is borne along the tide of passion and absorbed in her sufferings : she realizes all that is suggested by the progress of the story and answers the utmost expectation of the beholder. She does not lift the imagination out of itself. Every nerve is strained—her frame is convulsed—her breath is suspended—her forehead knit together—fate encloses her round and seizes on his struggling victim. Nothing can be more natural or more affecting than her whole conception of those parts in which she has appeared.

"It is those reaches of the soul in which it looks down on its sufferings—in which it rises superior to nature and fortune and gathers strength and grandeur from its despair—that gives such majesty and power to the acting of Mrs. Siddons. She seems formed for scenes of terror and agony and fit to contend with them ; and then only to possess the entire plenitude and expansion of her being."

The conclusion at which one arrives after gleaning all the wheat from the chaff is simply this—that Miss O'Neill had a remarkable gift of appealing to the emotions, while Mrs. Siddons, in addition to that gift, had the still nobler one of appealing to the mind. Genest, always impartial and reliable, sums up the

matter in his usual terse way. "It was extremely injudicious," he says, "in the admirers of Miss O'Neill, to put her in competition with Mrs. Siddons; they ought to have contented themselves with saying that she was the best tragic actress after Mrs. Siddons."

Miss O'Neill certainly enjoyed an amazing popularity. She drew such crowded houses that her salary was gradually raised to £30 a week; her "benefit" packed the house to overflowing. In the provinces she seems to have made just as powerful a sensation; we are told that at Portsmouth she received as much as £75 for one week's salary.

Her beauty was of the classic type. She had small Grecian features and her figure was of medium height. Her voice was "deep, clear and mellow"; Talma called it her "voice of tears." She could dance gracefully, and Kelly tells us that once, when playing *Letitia Hardy* in Dublin, she sang a song composed by himself. She had a slight stoop in the shoulders, but it does not seem to have detracted from the dignity alluded to her by biographers.

In comedy Miss O'Neill does not seem to have been more than second-rate. In Dublin she had failed, as already related, to surpass Miss Walstein in that branch of her art, and in London she was no more successful. She made her first London appearance in comedy as *Lady Teazle.* This was in the spring of 1816, but the performance fell flat. Her voice, which was habitually mournful, was quite unsuited to comic characters, and her interpretation of the author's intention not always beyond reproach. In short, once the public had satisfied its curiosity, her name ceased to be a draw when advertised in comedy. It is only fair to add, however, that neither her *Lady Bell* in "*Know Your*

MISS O'NEILL AS JULIET.

Own Mind," nor her *Bizarre* in "*The Inconstant*," both parts in which she had achieved considerable success in Dublin, were performed by her in London.

Throughout Miss O'Neill's short theatrical career she was the favourite *Juliet* of the London stage. Charles Kemble was invariably her *Romeo*, and his daughter, Fanny Kemble, in her "Records of a Girlhood," tells us a pretty story of a meeting between the two in their old age. "This amiable and excellent woman," she writes, "was always an attached friend of our family; and one day, when she was about to take leave of me at the end of a morning visit, I begged her to let my father have the pleasure of seeing her, and ran to his study to tell him whom I had with me. He followed me hastily to the drawing-room, and stopping at the door, extended his arms towards her, exclaiming, 'Ah, Juliet!' Lady Becher (Miss O'Neill) ran to him and embraced him with a pretty, affectionate grace, and the scene was pathetic as well as comical, for they were both white-haired, she being considerably upwards of sixty and he of seventy years old; but she still retained the slender elegance of her exquisite figure, and he of his pre-eminent personal beauty."

On July 13th Miss O'Neill made her last appearance on the stage as *Mrs. Haller* in "*Pizarro*," her career having lasted only five years. In the following December she married Mr. William Wrixon Becher, an Irish M.P. (for Mallow). This gentleman possessed considerable estates in Ireland, and subsequently, through the death of an uncle, came into a baronetcy.

Lady Becher never returned to the stage. It was calculated that she had earned not less than £12,000 a year by her exertions. Throughout her career her

reputation in private life had remained unblemished, although her youth and beauty must have exposed her to the usual temptations connected with the theatre. She appears to have behaved with generosity towards the various members of her family, although she was credited with an avaricious and miserly disposition. When she became Lady Becher she is said to have affected an amusing ignorance of all details connected with the stage, a foible she shared with Lady Derby.

She died on the 29th October, 1872.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME STARS AND LESSER STARS

(1800–1850)

THE first years of the new century saw the retirement of several actresses of note. Mrs. Pope, the second wife of Pope the actor, was taken ill in June, 1803, and died before the month was out. Louisa Brunton left the stage, in December, 1807, to become the wife of the Earl of Craven; and in the following year two of the old brigade, Miss Pope and Mrs. Mattocks, the latter of whom claimed to have been on the stage for fifty-eight years, made their farewell bows to the public amidst the regretful plaudits of a multitude of friends.

Maria Ann Pope was born in 1775 at Waterford. She was the daughter of a merchant named Campion, a member of an old Cork family, who at his death left his family without any adequate means of support. Maria was placed under the care of a relative, and whilst she was under this guardianship was taken for the first time to the theatre, to see a performance of the tragedy, "*The Orphan.*" The girl became violently stage-struck as a result of this experience, and upon her return home could talk or think of little else. Daly was immediately applied to for an engagement, but without success. He, however, passed her on to Hitchcock, the manager of the Crow Street Theatre, who, although he expressed the opinion

that she showed promise, told her that she was too young to master such a difficult profession. He was in the act of turning away to attend to some one else when the disappointed candidate frantically seized him by the coat-tails and exclaimed, "Oh, sir! but hear me!" The tragic quality of her tone so arrested his attention that he stopped, hesitated, and finally requested her to give him some proof of her ability. The tremulous aspirant thereupon recited some passages from the "*Orphan*" with so much feeling that Hitchcock melted altogether and promised to give her a trial upon the stage.

She accordingly made her début at Crow Street in 1792, when she played *Monimia*. She was at first so timid that Hitchcock had literally to force her before the audience, whose hearty cheers of encouragement, instead of reassuring her, so terrified her that she fainted away in the manager's arms. When she recovered, however, from her swoon, she insisted upon making another attempt. This time, fortunately, she delivered her lines with so much tenderness and real feeling that the audience was delighted, and gave her round upon round of enthusiastic applause. She afterwards played *Juliet*, *Estifania*, *Desdemona*, *Rutland* and the usual stock tragic characters with decided success.

Visits to York and Liverpool followed, Maria Campion, for family reasons, changing her name to Mrs. Spencer. She drew crowded houses whilst on this tour, and upon her return to the Dublin stage attracted the attention of Lewis, the comedian, who strongly recommended her to Covent Garden. An engagement at that theatre was the result of this introduction; "Mrs. Spencer" making her début there on

the 13th October, 1797, when she played her favourite character of *Monimia*. From that date she seems to have been accepted by the London public as a very tolerable tragedy actress, although hardly in the very first rank. Her *Juliet* was her most successful rôle, and one that called forth very high criticism. She also played *Indiana* in "*The Conscious Lovers*," *Cordelia*, *Jane Shore*, *Julia* in "*The Rivals*," and several other important characters with success.

On January 26th she was announced in the bills for "*Secrets Worth Knowing*," as "Mrs. Pope, late Mrs. Spencer," her marriage to Mr. Pope having taken place two days earlier at St. George's, Hanover Square.

In 1801 she accompanied him to Drury Lane, making her first appearance there as *Juliet*, and subsequently originating several characters, amongst them *Mrs. Lovemore* in "*The Way to Keep Him*"; *Caroline*, in Holcroft's "*Hear Both Sides*"; and *Lady Caroline Malcolm*, in Cumberland's "*Serious Resolution*."

On 10th June, 1803, she played *Desdemona* to the *Othello* of Cooper, an actress named Mrs. Ansell taking the part of *Emilia*. Mrs. Pope was, however, taken so ill in the third act that she was obliged to retire, Mrs. Ansell taking her part. This proved to be the beginning of the end, for although Mrs. Pope was at one time thought to be recovering, she was seized with an apoplectic fit on the 18th of June, and expired at Half-Moon Street, Piccadilly. On the 25th she was buried in the same grave as Pope's first wife, Elizabeth, in Westminster Abbey.

As an actress, the second Mrs. Pope was in all respects inferior to the first, but she was a good, useful actress nevertheless. She had a retentive memory, a clear voice and a sweet face. Her characteristics on

the stage were tenderness and pathos, whilst in private life she was loved for her engaging manners and the goodness of her heart. There is a portrait of her by Sir Martin Archer Shee in the Garrick Club.

Louisa Brunton, afterwards Countess of Craven, came of a theatrical family. Her father was one John Brunton, at one time a grocer in Drury Lane, but later for many years the proprietor of the Norwich theatre. He appeared at Covent Garden in 1774, but subsequently his efforts were confined to Norwich and Bath. Louisa Brunton was the youngest of six daughters. She had not the talent of her elder sister, Elizabeth (Mrs. Merry), but was extraordinarily lovely, and on the whole a creditable comedy actress. At an early age she showed a leaning towards the stage, and when she made her first appearance at Covent Garden on 5th October, 1803, as *Lady Townly* to the *Lord Townly* of Kemble, she met with a very favourable reception. The "Theatrical Inquisitor" of November, 1803, described her as being "extremely handsome and striking," and declared that her features were "expressive of archness and vivacity."

During the four years (1803 to 1807) that Louisa Brunton was on the stage, her name stands to a long list of parts. Among them may be mentioned *Julia* in "*The School for Reform*," *Rosara* in "*She Would and She Wouldn't*," *Alithea* in "*The Country Girl*," *Dorinda* in "*The Beaux' Stratagem*," *Marianne* in "*The Mysterious Husband*," and *Angelina* in "*Love Makes a Man*." She was also the original representative of a good many unimportant parts.

During her entire stay at Covent Garden, her brother, known as "Brunton the younger," who made his appear-

ance there in 1800, was acting at the same theatre. Another theatrical member of the family was her niece, Elizabeth Brunton, afterwards Mrs. Yates.

Louisa Brunton's beauty was more remarkable than her acting, although she seems to have been lively and natural, and to have attained a great deal of popularity. She was intelligent and not without distinction, and altogether, when William, seventh Baron and first Earl of Craven, decided to make her his wife, nobody was very much surprised. She left the stage in December, 1807, and on the 30th of the same month the public journals announced: "Miss Brunton, of Covent Garden Theatre, was married to the Earl of Craven at seven in the evening, at Craven House, and the following day the happy pair set off for Combe Abbey."

After the death of the Earl, on the 30th July, 1825, his Countess lived in the utmost retirement until 1860, in which year she departed this life, having already almost passed from the memory of mankind.

Miss Pope, "easy natural Miss Pope," as Charles Lamb called her, the original *Mrs. Candour*, and the pupil and protégée of Kitty Clive, seems, together with Mrs. Mattocks who follows her, to have somehow strayed into the wrong place here. Beginning their careers somewhere about the middle of the eighteenth century, they lingered on into the nineteenth, as if loath to surrender the laurels so nobly won. Both retained a position of supremity to the last, the year 1808, chosen by both for retirement, finding their popularity undiminished.

Miss Pope was the only real successor to Kitty Clive in hoyden and chambermaid parts. When that genius retired, almost at the beginning of the younger woman's

career, the latter was able to step into her friend's shoes and wear them with ease and distinction. As *Phillis* in "*The Conscious Lovers*," *Beatrice* in "*Much Ado About Nothing*," and, above all, as *Nell* in "*The Devil To Pay*," Miss Pope made for herself a reputation which ever afterwards remained unshaken.

It is true that to Kitty Clive the young actress owed a large measure of her success. The veteran actress had taken a great fancy to her from the first, taking her under her special protection, and imparting to her the fruits of her own experience. She took immense pains with her pupil, carefully perfecting her in the parts that she herself had made so famous. That of *Nell* in particular, Miss Pope's best part, was the one that had carried Kitty Clive to the summit of her fame. It was well known that she had carefully schooled her pupil in the part, and when, therefore, those who had seen the old favourite play it, saw how thoroughly she had done her work, they were delighted to welcome her successor with open arms.

There was a good deal of similarity in the characters of these two women. Sensible, outspoken, honest, they managed to preserve unblemished reputations in an age when lapses from virtue were regarded with lenience, and when the profession they adorned was one that bristled with temptations to which a very large number of their contemporaries succumbed. Miss Pope, so much younger than her friend, had the advantage of much profitable advice from the latter in regard to both her professional and her private life, much that was honourable in her career being traceable to the kindly, sensible mentor, whose affections she had gained.

Tate Wilkinson tells us that on the second night on

which Miss Pope was to play *Corinna* in "*The Confederacy*," Mrs. Clive called her into the green-room just before she was to go on to the stage and said to her: "My dear Pope, you played particularly well on Saturday, as a young actress, but take from me a word of advice, which I would have every performer attend to. You acted with great and deserved approbation, but to-night you must endeavour to act better, and expect to receive less applause. The violent thunder of applause last Saturday, on your first appearance, was not at all deserved, it was only benevolently bestowed to give you the pleasing information that they were well delighted, and that you had their warmest wishes that you would hereafter merit the kindness they bestowed on you."

Miss Pope, far from being piqued at this plain speaking, seems to have laid the words to heart and acted upon them, thereby displaying her characteristic good sense. Mrs. Clive, on the other hand, never showed the slightest jealousy of the clever pupil who was so rapidly coming to the front in the line of parts that had hitherto been particularly her own. It is pleasant to be able to record that these happy relations between the two friends were happily maintained until death parted them.

Miss Pope acted with the Drury Lane company throughout her career. When young she played chiefly girls and chambermaids; later, parts such as *Mrs. Heidelberg*, that were more suited to her age. It was a long time before the managers would allow her to relinquish the younger parts, however, for the simple reason that she could not be replaced. When at one time she wanted to give up *Mrs. Frail*, Sheridan would not allow her to do so, alleging that her name

in the bills was invaluable to the theatre. Among her greatest successes may be reckoned her *Corinna*, *Polly Honeycombe* (which she originated), *Dolly Scrip*, *Olivia* in "*The Plain Dealer*," *Mrs. Doggerel*, *Flippanta*, *Lappet*, *Kitty* in "*High Life*," *Mrs. Frail*, and above all, *Mrs. Candour* in "*The School for Scandal.*" Her performance of this last was inimitable, and this fact, combined no doubt with her propensity for blurting out what was in her mind, caused the name of Mrs. Candour to stick to her throughout the rest of her career.

In the Pageant of "*The Jubilee*," Miss Pope usually walked, or danced, as *Beatrice* in the masquerade scene, with Kelly as her Benedick. She was an excellent dancer, and Kelly not a bad one. Kelly tells an amusing story of one of these occasions. Moody came to him one evening and requested him to lend his masque and domino to a friend of Moody's, who had a fancy to see the audience from the stage. This friend had promised to do everything that Kelly did, having frequently seen him and Miss Pope. Kelly falling in with this whim, the gentleman went on to the stage, but "appeared instantly planet-struck, and stood perfectly still, nor did he move till pushed off." Miss Pope's rage and disappointment at not receiving her usual applause can be imagined. She stormed and raged against Kelly, vowing vengeance upon him in no uncertain voice. He wrote next morning and apologized humbly, at the same time imploring her forgiveness. Her heart seems to have melted towards him, but she never forgave Moody.

Miss Pope was certainly a most valuable acquisition to the stage. As early as 1761, Churchill mentioned her as likely to prove an able successor to Mrs. Clive,

whilst in 1772 the author of the "Theatrical Biography" wrote: "As an actress, we think her a first-rate acquisition to the stage, particularly in low comedy; the features of her face, the freedom of her laugh, and, above all, what the painters call *manner*, conspire to give her this excellence." By "low comedy" this writer probably meant nothing more than chambermaids' parts, for Miss Pope never played vulgar characters. In 1790 another writer observes: "The question has long since lain with critics, not where she is deficient, but where does she most excel?"

Her laughter was spontaneous, her gaiety infectious; in fact, she was a finished actress who excelled in so many parts that it was impossible to place one performance before the other. Once, and only once was the sensible Miss Pope betrayed into a professional foolishness, but it was one which proved to be a very costly one.

Not long before Garrick's retirement, at a period when that frequently harassed manager was being more than usually pestered with claims and complaints by the members of his company, Miss Pope, choosing an unfortunate moment, applied to him for an increase of salary upon the renewal of her engagement. The manager sent her honeyed compliments in reply, but no offer of a rise. This so irritated the good Pope, that she wrote him a letter so stinging in its sarcasm that a breach between them was the inevitable result, and she found herself without an engagement.

For a short time anger supported her, but as the weeks passed by and the manager showed no signs of relenting, poor Miss Pope's sense of injury gave place to tearful alarm. Rushing to her friend Clive, she sobbed out her story upon that good-natured Samaritan's

bosom, imploring her to come to her assistance. Clive, very much upset, promised to beg for a reconciliation. "Jimmy" Raftor was chosen as ambassador and sent to plead with Garrick, but without success; the great man was thoroughly offended and positively declined to take his old favourite back. The unhappy actress thereupon wrote Garrick a frantic letter, couched in terms of deep abasement. Accusing herself of vanity, but explaining that her "heart was not bad," she went on to say: "As I know of no excuse to palliate my wrong conduct, I must rely upon your generosity still, to forgive and be my friend." Even this piteous epistle, however, failed to conciliate the sorely wounded Garrick, who wrote a cold letter informing her that her place was filled. Miss Pope, obliged to submit at last, crossed over to Ireland, carrying a heavy heart with her.

However, in the end, her faithful ally, Mrs. Clive, did procure her reinstatement. Garrick, who could withstand the importunities of a Pope, was utterly unable to hold out against the good-natured blandishments of the much-loved Clive, who returned again and again to the attack, taking up her protégée's case as if it had been her own. In a complimentary letter, in which she expressed her regret at his approaching retirement from the stage, she added the following impassioned appeal:

"Now let me say one word about my poor unfortunate friend Miss Pope. I know how much she disobliged you, and if I had been in your place, I believe I should have acted as you did. But by this time I hope you have forgot your resentment and will look upon her late behaviour as having been taken with a dreadful fit of vanity, which for the time took her senses from her, and having been

tutored by an affected heart, which helped to turn her head; but recollect her in the other light—a faithful creature to you, on whom you could always depend; certainly a good actress, amiable in her character, both in being a very modest woman, and very good to her family, and to my certain knowledge has the greatest regard for you. Now, my dear Mr. Garrick, I hope it is not yet too late to reinstate her before you quit your affairs here. I beg it! I entreat it! I shall look on it as the greatest favour you can confer on

"Your ever-obliged friend,

"C. Clive."

This letter, endorsed by Garrick "my pivy excellent," proved irresistible. The offending Miss Pope was recalled and reinstated, being even invited to name her own terms. In a delighted letter to Garrick, she expressed her fervent gratitude, naïvely styling herself his "prodigal daughter, out of her senses with joy." Thus ended Miss Pope's one recorded lapse from her accustomed path of amiability and common sense.

The almost child-like simplicity of this most excellent actress makes her a very lovable figure. Her heart remained always young in spite of the rude blow dealt it by Holland, the actor, to whom she was devotedly attached and in whom she reposed all her simple trust. In vain had Garrick warned her of the young man's unreliability, fickleness and recklessness; good, faithful Pope thought she knew better, and looked forward to the time when she should attain the untold bliss of becoming his wife. One dreadful day, however, these fond hopes received

their death-blow with a suddenness that was overwhelming. She was on her way to visit Mrs. Clive at Twickenham, when she was passed on the road by a post-chaise containing Holland and a lady. Wondering who his companion might be, Miss Pope alighted at Richmond Bridge and walked along the bank towards Strawberry Hill, keeping her eyes open as she did so. It was not long before she discovered a boat drawn up into the rushes, its occupants plainly enjoying themselves to a degree that was positively maddening to behold, considering that they turned out to be no other than the faithless Holland and the disgracefully captivating Mrs. Baddeley. Fortunately, pride kept poor Miss Pope from the recriminations which usually follow painful episodes of this description, but from that day she never spoke to Holland again, except professionally on the stage.

Our actress lived for forty years in Queen Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields and afterwards in Newman Street, where she entertained many persons of note. Horace Smith was one of those who admired and respected her. "I never heard her speak ill of any human being," he wrote; "I have sometimes even been exasperated by her benevolence."

Her memory beginning at last to fail her, Miss Pope withdrew from the stage on 26th May, 1808, when she played *Deborah Dowlas* in "*The Heir-at-Law*" for the first and last time. Besides *Mrs. Candour* and *Polly Honeycombe*, she originated the parts of *Miss Sterling* in "*The Clandestine Marriage*" and that of *Tilburnia* in "*The Critic*," as well as a long list of other less known characters. After her retirement, she lingered on for some years,

gradually sinking into decay. The following is Horace Smith's pathetic description of her last days: "She was attacked by a stupor of the brain, and this once lively woman, who had entertained me repeatedly with anecdotes of people of note in her earlier days, sat quietly in her arm-chair by the fire-side, patting the head of her poodle dog, and smiling at what passed in conversation, without being at all conscious of the meaning of what was uttered."

Mrs. Mattocks retired from the stage only a few weeks later than Miss Pope. She was the daughter of a low comedian named Lewis Hallam, who was at one time manager of the theatre in Goodman's Fields; and when, in consequence of pecuniary embarrassments, he was obliged to quit England for America, he placed his little daughter, then only four years old, with her aunt, Mrs. Barrington, an actress of some merit. Mrs. Mattocks herself declared that she played *The Child* in "*Coriolanus*" on the stage at Covent Garden when she was only four and a half years old, but Genest states that she must have been mistaken, as "*Coriolanus*" was not given at Covent Garden until 10th December, 1754. As Mrs. Mattocks was born in 1746, Genest is certainly right, and if she did play the part at such an early age, it cannot have been at Covent Garden. She however played the part of *The Parish Girl* in Gay's "*What D'ye Call It*" for her uncle's "benefit" at Covent Garden, when she was about the age stated. She was so diminutive upon the stage that a gentleman present declared that he could hear her very well, but that he could not see her without a glass!

During the next few years Miss Hallam played several "child" parts at Covent Garden. *The Duke of York* in "*Richard III*" (1752), *The Page* in "*The Orphan*" (1754), *The Child* in "*Coriolanus*" (1754), *The Page* in "*The Rover*" (1757), *Falstaff's Boy* in "*Henry V*" (1757), and *Robin* in "*Merry Wives of Windsor*" (1758). On April 10th, 1761, she played *Juliet* to the *Romeo* of Ross, for Barrington's "benefit." She was announced in the bills as "a young gentlewoman, being her first appearance (as a woman)," and was then in her sixteenth year. Her reception was wonderfully enthusiastic, the applause she received inducing the managers to give her a permanent engagement without delay. In the following season she played a long list of parts, both in tragedy and comedy, and originated the part of *Lucinda* in Bickerstaffe's "*Love in a Village.*" By the end of this season she had obtained a hold upon the public, which she never relinquished to the end. She remained with the Covent Garden management throughout her career, only excepting a few visits to the provinces. She was in Liverpool in 1773 and again in 1774 and 1775, playing a long list of her favourite characters, to the unbounded delight of the people of that city.

Mrs. Mattocks was the original of so many parts, it would be impossible to mention all. When Cumberland's musical comedy "*The Summer's Tale*" was given on 6th December, 1765, she was the *Amelia*. This piece in three acts was the second play that Cumberland wrote, and the first to be acted. It was a very indifferent piece of work, and had it not been for the singing and acting of Mrs. Mattocks would probably have been killed on the spot. The only applause

gained was that given to the vocal performers, Mrs. Mattocks, and Dyer, who played the part of *Henry*, securing the good opinion of the audience in spite of the rather feeble quality of the play. Eventually it was cut down to two acts and re-christened, being given the name of "*Amelia*," when it achieved a tolerable success. It is interesting, in view of Cumberland's subsequent popularity as a dramatist, to read that it was after one of the rehearsals of the first presentation of "*The Summer's Tale*" that Smith the actor, who was acquainted with him at Cambridge, remonstrated with Cumberland for wasting his talents on opera, at the same time urging him to get to work without delay on the writing of a good comedy. This friendly counsel made a great impression upon Cumberland's mind, and it was not very long before he followed it.

Mrs. Mattocks was the original *Betty Blackberry* in O'Keefe's comedy "*The Farmer*," a character in which she is said to have been "inimitable"; and *Mrs. Racket* in Mrs. Cowley's "*Belle's Stratagem*," *Priscilla Tomboy* in "*The Romp*," and *Lettice* in Colman's "*Man and Wife*" were also her creations. She was an actress of extraordinary versatility, playing in tragedy, comedy, and opera. In the first-named, however, she was not good, whilst as a singer she was never more than second-rate. It was in comedy, to which she latterly confined herself, that she took a very first place, being one of the most brilliant comic actresses of her day. The writer of the "Theatrical Biography" wrote, in 1772, of Mrs. Mattocks: "It is the peculiar distinction of this actress that she possesses so lively a sensibility about her as to *realize* her parts; nor is she deficient in judgment to prevent that

sensibility from verging to the unnatural. To these advantages she unites a pleasing person and agreeable voice, which on the whole render her one of the most useful performers belonging to the theatre she is engaged in." The same writer states that she eloped to France to marry Mr. Mattocks, who became manager of the Liverpool theatre, a venture which eventually landed him in financial ruin. The marriage is believed to have been an unhappy one, and it was hinted that there was a very close intimacy between Mrs. Mattocks and Robert Bensley.

On 7th June, 1808, Mrs. Mattocks made her last appearance as *Flora* in "*The Wonder.*" Cooke recited Garrick's "Ode," and afterwards the old favourite delivered an address in prose to her numerous friends. The scene was "very affecting," the parting being acutely felt on both sides of the footlights, and when the curtain fell, old playgoers filed sadly out of the theatre, convinced that they would not live to see her replaced.

Mrs. Mattocks survived her husband many years. She had latterly received a reduced salary, but, nevertheless, on retiring from the stage, and after settling a handsome sum upon her daughter when the latter married a barrister named Hewitt, she was left with a little fortune of £6000 in stocks for herself. She took up her abode in Kensington, and as she found it inconvenient to receive her own dividends, she foolishly gave her son-in-law a power of attorney. When he died, greatly in debt, she comforted herself with the thought that she had sufficient to provide for the maintenance of her daughter and grand-daughter as well as her son. When the dividend became due, however, she made the hideous discovery that her rascal of a son-in-law had

sold her stocks and had spent the money. As he had regularly paid her dividends, she had no suspicion of the fraud until it was too late.

She would now have been in dire straits had it not been for her good friends in the profession. A "benefit" was hurriedly organized on her behalf, and on 24th May, 1813, "*The Wonder*" was given at the Opera House, with a magnificent cast, which included Quick, Fawcett, Palmer, Bentham, and Mrs. Jordan, who played *Violante*. "Mrs. Mattocks," so ran the bills, "having been powerfully solicited, by those whom she thinks it her duty to oblige, once more to make her appearance upon the stage, will *attempt* to return her personal thanks to the public at the close of the performance." In accordance with this announcement, the grateful actress made one more address to the public before disappearing into private life. This "benefit," at which all the performers gave their services gratuitously, brought in a sum of £1092, a good part of which consisted of presents. Mrs. Mattocks was able to purchase an annuity for herself, with some reversion for her daughter. Her death occurred at Kensington on 25th June, 1826.

Mrs. Litchfield, a good sound actress, whose name occurs upon the Covent Garden bills during the years between 1797 and 1806, made her final appearance at the Haymarket in 1812, after an absence of six years from the London stage. Genest says that she had "one of the finest voices that was ever heard," and beyond this there is not much recorded of her. Miss Bolton, who in the following year retired from the stage to become the wife of Lord Thurlow, was a singer rather than an actress, but deserves notice as

having been one of the successful *Pollys* of Gay's "*Beggar's Opera*." It is remarkable that this character should have carried three of its representatives to the peerage. Lavinia Fenton, the original *Polly Peachum* at Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1728, became the Duchess of Bolton; Miss Bolton, who played it at Covent Garden in 1806 so successfully that it had to be repeated ten times, became Baroness Thurlow; whilst yet a third, Miss Stephens, became Countess of Essex. The last mentioned made a sensation as *Polly* in 1813. She was an opera and concert singer of very high reputation, but not much of an actress. Once, when she played *Ophelia* to the *Hamlet* of Young, she distinguished herself by introducing a song called "Mad Bess"! It is a relief to find that she was cordially hissed. She was the original *Mrs. Cornflower* in "*The Farmer's Wife*," by Charles Dibdin, Junr. She retired in 1835, and in 1838 married the fifth Earl of Essex. She survived him for forty-three years, and died on 2nd February, 1882, in the house in which she was married, 9 Belgrave Square.

Another actress destined to enter the peerage was Harriet Mellon, whose first husband was Mr. Coutts, the rich banker, and whose second was William Aubrey De Vere, ninth Duke of St. Albans. Miss Mellon, who retired from the stage in 1815, never attained to more than second-rate rank in her profession, being chiefly remembered for her good looks and the success of her matrimonial ventures.

Her mother, a woman of peasant ancestry, was a shop-girl in her native city of Cork. An itinerary company of players happened to visit the town; she became bitten with stage fever and applied for an

engagement. As she could neither read nor write without considerable labour, it is not surprising that the only engagement that could be offered to her was that of wardrobe keeper, dresser, and money-taker. This she gratefully accepted, and forthwith became a member of the company known as Kena's. At this time she called herself Mrs. Mellon, claiming to have married a certain Lieutenant Mathew Mellon on Boxing-day, 1777. That gentleman, described as an officer in the Madras Native Infantry, had, she declared, deserted her soon after the marriage, and had never been heard of since. Whatever the truth of this story, certain it is that before she had been long in Kena's company, namely on the 11th November, 1777, she brought a fine, strong girl into the world, whom she named Harriet. Five years later, in 1782, Mrs. Mellon married the leader of the orchestra in Kena's company, a man named Entwhistle, and about this time the little Harriet made her first appearance on the stage as one of the juvenile mourners around the bier of *Juliet*. She continued playing juvenile parts, and on the 16th October, 1787, in a barn doing duty for a theatre at Ulverstone, she appeared as *Little Pickle* in the farce "*The Spoiled Child*," and subsequently *Priscilla Slowboy* in "*The Romp*," *Narcissa* in "*Inkle and Yarico*," and *Phebe* in "*As You Like It*." In 1789 she joined Stanton's company in the Midlands, playing for a guinea a week important parts in comedy, including *Beatrice*, *Celia*, *Lydia Languish*, and *Letitia Hardy*. Whilst at Stafford she was seen by Sheridan who, after considerable delays, gave her an engagement at Drury Lane in 1795, where she made her first appearance on the London stage as *Lydia Languish*. Her beauty excited a great deal of admiration and comment,

but otherwise she proved to be a failure, her acting being considered feeble in the extreme. She was put into the chorus by the management, and kept in the background for a time. In the following season, however, she was given the part of *Lady Godiva* in the revival of O'Keefe's "*Peeping Tom*," and acquitted herself creditably, being afterwards entrusted with a good many parts, chiefly of lesser importance. The rest of her theatrical career consisted of visits to Liverpool where she was exceedingly popular, and a succession of seasons at Drury Lane, at which theatre she was latterly given parts of importance such as *Nell* in "*The Devil to Pay*," *Muslin*, *Miss Prue*, and *Mrs. Candour*. This last was decidedly her most successful effort.

Harriet Mellon was, of course, entirely eclipsed by Mrs. Jordan, whom she greatly admired, and whom she is said to have taken as her model. She must, however, have attained to some degree of excellence, for although only ranking amongst the second-rate actresses at Drury Lane, she was frequently given comic parts of first-rate importance. In private life she was, on the whole, popular, in spite of a fiery temper, inherited presumably from her mother, whose affection for her child would often find expression in actual blows.

Harriet possessed an inextinguishable flow of animal spirits and a vivacity of manner that was of great assistance to her both in private life and on the stage. A little inclined to portliness, she was a handsome brunette with small features and dark bright eyes. Her expression when in repose was, however, inclined to be rather dull. Mrs. Charles Mathews describes it thus: "A heavy frown and a sunny smile constituted all its meaning when not in repose; but a modest

dropping of the eyelids from time to time while speaking had a most lovable effect upon the percipient." We may assume that this last-named attraction was in part accountable for the interest Harriet excited in the bosom of the aged Mr. Coutts. That somewhat eccentric old gentleman, whose wife was at the time of his first acquaintance with Miss Mellon still living, became a constant visitor at Mrs. Entwhistle's house in Little Russell Street. Rumour had it that the nature of these visits was not strictly paternal, but it is not likely that Harriet's mother, who, in spite of her violence when in a temper, was genuinely attached to her beautiful daughter, would have allowed anything that exceeded the bounds of propriety to occur. She had, in fact, other ideals in view; the rich banker's wife was bound, sooner or later, to pay the final toll to Nature, and Mrs. Entwhistle fondly hoped that should this event only occur in time her beloved Harriet should step into her shoes. To this end, therefore, she made a great fuss over the old man; on one occasion, we are told, actually begging "the richest man in London" to bring certain articles of his wardrobe in his pocket that she might mend them.

Mr. Coutts was a remarkably shabby dresser. His thin, spare figure was usually clad in garments very much "gone at the seams" and invariably ill-fitting, so that he was often mistaken for a person in the last stages of genteel poverty. One instance of this is contained in an amusing anecdote which may not come amiss here. It was his habit each day after the bank was closed to take exercise by walking to a certain chemist's to have a tonic made up. Always quiet and unassuming, he would, if the shop happened to be invaded by another customer, stand aside patiently so

that the new-comer might be served first. No stranger would guess that the quiet, spare man, with his delicate face and simple, not to say thread-bare clothes, was the millionaire banker known to fame. On one occasion a kind-hearted merchant, who had chanced on several occasions to come at the same time as Mr. Coutts and had noticed his indigent appearance, sealed up a little packet of money and carried it to the chemist's shop, intending to bestow it upon one whom he concluded was a gentleman in reduced circumstances plainly in need of assistance. When he reached the shop, however, the seedy, modest individual whom he expected to see had not put in an appearance, having probably omitted to fetch his tonic owing to pressure of work at the bank. After fidgeting about for some time, waiting in vain for the object of his intended charity, the merchant at last decided that he had no further excuse to linger. Before leaving, however, he explained to the astonished shopman how the absence of the poor pale gentleman had prevented him making the donation he had brought with him. The chemist could hardly believe his ears. "And you really meant to offer pecuniary aid to that person, sir!" he exclaimed. "Have you no idea who he is?"

"None," replied the other. "But I conclude he is some gentleman in distressed or at least reduced circumstances."

"You shall judge, sir, as to his circumstances," said the chemist with emphasis. "That unassuming, quiet individual is—THOMAS COUTTS!"

The elderly Mr. Coutts, notwithstanding all his wealth, was a very lonely man. His daughters had long all been married, and his wife was a bed-ridden invalid; he was therefore cast a good deal upon his

own resources during his hours of leisure. His visits to the green-room and to the house where Miss Mellon resided soon gave exercise for scandal-loving tongues, and it was partly to still these that he introduced that young lady to his three distinguished daughters—the Marchioness of Bute, the Countess of Guildford, and Lady Burdett. From that moment until the death of Mr. Coutts's first wife, these ladies were on terms of almost sisterly intimacy with the household in Little Russell Street, their grand carriages continually standing outside the house, to the astonishment and edification of the neighbours.

At last all this came to an end. On the 7th February, 1815, Miss Mellon made her last appearance on the stage as *Audrey* in "*As You Like It*," and less than a month later she was married to Mr. Coutts, whose wife had at last gone the way of all flesh. The old gentleman was no less than eighty years of age at the time. The marriage took place privately, at St. Pancras Church, but was publicly announced in the journals of the day on March 2.

Thomas Coutts lived until 1822, and on his death left his wife the whole of his immense fortune. She, however, behaved with great generosity to the children of his first marriage, with whom she continued to be very friendly. Her wealth, of course, procured her a great number of suitors, amongst them, it was reported, a royal one, but she turned a deaf ear to all but the Duke of St. Albans, to whom she was married on 16th June, 1827, at her house in Stratton Street.

Throughout life she was the subject of much calumny both in the Press and in private drawing-rooms, her elevation first to an immense fortune, and secondly to

the peerage, not unnaturally exciting the envy of her contemporaries. She was accused of being an adventuress, of being ostentatious, of having been guilty of all sorts of petty meannesses in her frantic desire to reach the goal at which she aimed. But as a matter of fact most of these charges were quite unfounded. She was admitted to have devoted a large portion of her wealth to charitable purposes, and when she died, in 1837, it was found that she had made her first husband's grandchild her heiress to a fortune said to have amounted to £1,800,000. In Lockhart's "Life of Sir Walter Scott," we find an account of a visit paid to Abbotsford by Mrs. Coutts, just before her second marriage. She seems to have met with Scott's approval, for he afterwards gave it as his opinion that she was a "kind, friendly woman, without either affectation or insolence in the display of her wealth."

The Duchess of St. Albans died in Stratton Street on 6th August, 1837. A portrait of her by Romney was exhibited at Burlington House in 1887. There are also portraits of her by Sir William Beechey and Masquerier.

Mrs. H. Johnston was a good actress, at one time in considerable favour with the public. She was the wife of Henry Erskine Johnston, and had acted with her husband in Ireland, as *Lady Contest* in "*The Wedding Day*" and *Josephine* in "*The Children in the Wood*," previous to making her début in London at the Haymarket, as *Ophelia*, in 1798, when her husband played *Hamlet*. She was engaged at Covent Garden from 1798 to 1803; at Drury Lane, from 1803 to 1805; and, with the exception of one season at Bath, 1806–7, she passed the rest of her theatrical career upon the boards

of Covent Garden, appearing for the last time at Conway's "benefit" in 1816. She played many parts in both comedy and tragedy, including *Lydia Languish*, *Kitty* in "*High Life Below Stairs*," *The Widow Bellmour*, *Letitia Hardy*, *Juliet*, *Rosalind*, *Viola*, and *Desdemona*. On the whole she was a useful actress, well up in the second-rate ranks.

Mrs. Powell, at one time the fellow-servant of Lady Hamilton in the house of Mrs. Budd, when the former was a housemaid and the latter a nursemaid, made her first appearance upon the London stage at the Haymarket on the 9th September, 1788, according to Genest (Wewitzer puts it a year earlier), the part chosen for her début being *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*." She was then known as Mrs. Farmer, but the following year she married Powell, who was at that time prompter at Liverpool. When the Drury Lane season 1789–90 opened at Drury Lane with "*Richard III*," Mrs. Powell played *Lady Anne* to the *Richard* of Kemble, being announced as "Mrs. Powell, late Mrs. Farmer." She continued to play at Drury Lane until 1811, being constantly coupled with Mrs. Siddons in parts of importance. "Her forte lay in the violent parts of tragedy," says Genest; "tenderness and pathos did not suit her." Nevertheless, she was a painstaking, capable actress, always a safe support to the leading performers, her opportunities for taking hints from the best models rendering her invaluable service later on. In 1788 she had played *Anne Bullen* to the *Queen Catherine* of Mrs. Siddons, and in 1795 she played *Young Norval* to the latter's *Lady Randolph*. She certainly did her best to imitate Mrs. Siddons, but with indifferent success.

Robson, in his quaint book "The Old Playgoer," describes Mrs. Powell as follows: "She had a remarkably fine person, good taste, good voice, and wanted nothing but originality of genius to have been a first-rate actress. She used to copy Siddons in the depth of her tones, and I have seen her in *Lady Macbeth* endeavour to look as much like her as possible, but it would not quite do." He also says: "One of her freaks was to play *Hamlet* for her 'benefit,' which I believe she did more than once, her figure, as I have heard, looking well *dressed à la Vandyke*. Of course, I did not witness the joke."

In the autumn of 1811 Mrs. Powell went over to Covent Garden, where she opened the season as *Lady Capulet*, and for the rest of it once more supported Mrs. Siddons, who was playing her "last season." Her second husband apparently died somewhere about this time, for on the 21st May, 1814, she had again changed her name, being announced to play *The Queen* in "*Hamlet*" as "Mrs. Renaud, late Mrs. Powell." She left the London stage after the season of 1815–16, and acted for two years in the provinces, finally settling down at Edinburgh in 1818. Here, under the management of Murray and his sister, Mrs. H. Siddons, she spent the rest of her career, being an invaluable support to Kean, Young, and other great London tragedians when they visited that city, until 1829, her last appearance taking place on September 30th. On this occasion she played *The Queen* to the *Hamlet* of Kean. In her old age she had improved enormously, her dignity of bearing, correct elocution and telling voice making her a very valuable acquisition to the theatre. On the 4th June, 1830, Murray gave her a "benefit," at which she did not appear, and is said to

have continued to pay her a salary to the date of her death, which is unknown.

The acquaintanceship between Mrs. Powell and Lady Hamilton was renewed when both were at the height of their prosperity. Towards the close of the eighteenth century, the famous Lady Hamilton drew large crowds to the theatres whenever it was known that she was to honour a performance with her presence. We can imagine with what curiosity she must have gazed at Mrs. Powell from her position in the boxes, and the furtive glances which the latter must have thrown in her direction whenever she came upon the stage. The contrast between their present high estate and that lowly one of far-off days when menial service seemed to be the limit of their horizon cannot have failed to stir the memories of both. That pleasant friendship, kept alive by correspondence, was the result of their further meeting, the following letter written by Mrs. Powell from her apartments in Southend, when on a visit to that place, will show :—

"Dear Lady Hamilton,—

"I cannot forbear writing a line to inform your ladyship I am at this place, and to tell you how much your absence is regretted by all sorts of people. Would to Heaven you were here to enliven this at present dull place. Please remember me to all at Merton."

CHAPTER XVIII

SOME STARS AND LESSER STARS—(*continued*)

1800–1850

MRS. BUNN was an actress in the "heavy tragedy" line, who left the stage when still young. She was the daughter of a biscuit-maker named Somerville, and was born in 1799. Her first appearance at Drury Lane, on 9th May, 1816, was in the first performance of Maturin's tragedy "*Bertram*," when she played *Imogene* to the *Bertram* of Kean. The latter was accused by Miss Somerville's friends of trying to keep the young actress back in her profession during the years she remained at Drury Lane. He is said to have refused to act with her except in certain characters in consequence of her being, as he said, "too big and overtowering a woman for his figure." Be that as it may, Miss Somerville left Drury Lane in disgust before her engagement of three years was out and went to Covent Garden, where, on 22nd October, she made her début as *Bianca* in "*Fazio*," by Dean Milman. This character she had "created" at Bath in the previous January, making quite a sensation; and when she played it at Covent Garden her performance of it was preferred to that of Miss O'Neill, who had already played it there. In 1819 Miss Somerville played at Birmingham, and there made the acquaintance of Alfred Bunn, whom she shortly after-

wards married. This marriage was an unfortunate one and led to some scandal, her popularity under her married name being less pronounced than hitherto. She was not much heard of after 1825, and died early in 1883. Mrs. Bunn was the original *Cornelia* in "*Gracchus*," by Sheridan Knowles, and the original *Queen Elizabeth* when "*Kenilworth*" was produced at Bath in 1821.

Miss Smith, afterwards Mrs. Bartley, was accepted by the public as a good tragedienne who might have gone further, had it not been for Mrs. Siddons and Miss O'Neill, by whom she was entirely eclipsed. When she made her first appearance at Covent Garden, on 2nd October, 1805, it was in comedy. Very reluctantly she allowed herself to be persuaded to play *Lady Townly*, and only on condition that she should be allowed to recite Collins' "Ode to the Passions," made fashionable by the adored Mrs. Siddons. Her success in this partially disguised the fact that her *Lady Townly* failed to please. Her *Belvidera*, however, and her *Estifania* were very nearly first-rate. Mrs. Siddons, in later life, spoke of Miss Smith as having been a likely rival when she first appeared in tragedy, but at that time every young actress who showed promise was instantly compared with Mrs. Siddons, often much to her detriment, even if it did not end in complete extinction. Donaldson tells us that "she had a noble, expressive face, full, strong and melodious voice capable of any intonation, and an original conception of the author." Macready, however, in his "Reminiscences," brushes her rather unceremoniously to one side by remarking, "Of the soul that goes to the making of an artist she has none."

In 1814 Miss Smith married George Bartley, and in 1818 she accompanied him to America, where she made a considerable reputation and accumulated a fortune. Planché, in his "Recollections and Reflections," gives an amusing anecdote of a little incident that occurred on the voyage to the United States. Soon after the ship had got well out to sea, one of the crew became mutinous, and was given a severe cut on the head by the captain in the presence of the passengers. Mrs. Bartley, who had already felt some qualms of sea-sickness, found this sight altogether too much for her equilibrium, and retired to her berth only to reappear when they were in sight of port. The first day she ventured upon deck she saw that the man who had received the cut was at the wheel. She went up to him full of solicitude and inquired, "How is your head now?" Whereupon the man made the following startling reply: "West-and-by-north, ma'am!"

Mrs. Bartley returned to this country in 1820, playing in the provinces until 1823, when she played *Mrs. Beverley* in "*The Gamester*" at Covent Garden on November 15th. After this her appearances were infrequent, and she retired from the stage in the character of *Lady Macbeth*.

Mrs. Davison, whose maiden name was Duncan, was an excellent actress of parts of the *Lady Teazle* and *Lady Townly* type. During her first season at Drury Lane, with which theatre she was connected for fourteen consecutive years, she played with great success a long list of first-rate comedy parts, amongst them *Rosalind*, *Lady Townly*, *Miss Hardcastle*, *Sylvia* ("*The Recruiting Officer*"), *Maria* ("*Way to Keep Him*"), *Miranda* ("*Busybody*"), and *Letitia Hardy*. In 1805 she

originated the part of *Juliana* in "*The Honeymoon*," being so successful that she was ever after connected with that part. Eclipsed for a time by Mrs. Jordan, she later came into her own again, and was very well received in some of the latter's most famous parts, particularly *Nell* in "*The Devil to Pay*" and *Peggy* in "*The Country Girl.*"

In 1812 she married James Davison, and in 1819 played *Lady Teazle* to the *Joseph Surface* of Macready at Covent Garden. Her last appearance on the stage was probably as *Mrs. Subtle* in "*Paul Pry*" at Drury Lane in 1829. She was an accomplished woman, with a good knowledge of music and a fair voice. She was tall, with dark hair and strong, expressive features, and enjoyed a very sound reputation. Leigh Hunt thought very highly of her, describing her as "the best *lady* our comic stage possesses"; he, however, censured her for her predilection for appearing in masculine garb.

An actress whose private career afforded abundant material for the pens of contemporary pamphleteers was Maria Foote, who, in 1831, married Charles Stanhope, fourth Earl of Harrington. She was a very lovely woman, whose small oval face, expressive features, and abundant light brown hair carried havoc into the hearts of many of the more susceptible among the male members of her audiences. She was an accomplished as well as a beautiful woman; her singing, to which she accompanied herself on the guitar, harp, or pianoforte, adding not a little to her popularity.

Born in 1798, she was the daughter of an officer in the army named Foote, who claimed to be descended from the famous Samuel Foote, and who, having sold his commission, became manager of the theatre at

Plymouth. Here, at the early age of twelve, Maria Foote made her first appearance upon any stage as *Susan Ashfield* in "*Speed the Plough.*" In 1814 she made her début at Covent Garden, playing *Amanthis* in Mrs. Inchbald's "*Child of Nature.*" Her reception was very favourable, but it did not take very long for her limitations to be discovered. After her first season in the Metropolis she owed her popularity to her beauty rather than to her ability, playing principally in second-rate parts. In Ireland and Scotland, however, she was enthusiastically supported, and made annual visits there for five years.

In 1815 an offer from Colonel Berkeley to play at her "benefit" at Cheltenham led to a connection with that gentleman which lasted for some years, and which resulted in the birth of two children. Miss Foote alleged that the colonel had only gained her favours by an offer of marriage which was to be fulfilled "the moment he could do so without injuring the hope of his earldom." This partnership was dissolved upon Miss Foote's receiving an offer of marriage from a Mr. Haynes, who seems to have had as strong a dread of its bonds as his predecessor, for he not very long afterwards broke his engagement, and being sued by the lady for breach of promise, was made to disgorge £3000 in settlement of the account. These proceedings were *caviare* to the scurrilous journalists of the day, whose attacks were so spiteful that the friends of Miss Foote, temporarily diverted from their allegiance, rallied about her once more and overwhelmed her with their sympathy. At Bath, in 1826, the feeling between the opposing camps of friend and foe came to a head. Miss Foote was very cruelly handled by some persons in the pit and gallery, who hissed and groaned

and tried to obstruct her in every possible way. Her supporters, on the other hand, applauded vociferously, and between the two not a thing could be heard when the actress was upon the stage. The next night there was an attempt to renew the disturbance, but it soon died down, and Miss Foote, who was playing *Rosalind*, got through her part without further mishap.

"The fuss which at this time was made about Miss Foote was ridiculous," says Genest. "She was a very pretty woman and a very pleasing actress, but would never have travelled about as a star if it had not been for circumstances totally unconnected with the stage."

Maria Foote's theatrical career ended at Birmingham in 1831, and in the same year she became the Countess of Harrington. She died in 1867. A whole-length portrait of her by Clint, as *Maria Darlington*, her most successful part, was sold in June, 1847, with the effects of Thomas Harris, lessee of Covent Garden.

Mrs. Davenport, one of the best representatives of "old woman" parts known to the stage, came out at Bath on 21st December, 1784, as *Lappet* in "*The Miser.*" She was the daughter of a Mr. Harvey, and was born at Launceston, in Cornwall, in 1765. She was educated at Bath, and it was owing to her forming the acquaintanceship of the manager whilst there that she secured her first engagement. After two seasons at Bath she went to Exeter, where she married Davenport, the actor. She accompanied him to Birmingham, and after trying in vain to secure an engagement in London was glad to accept one in Dublin, where she appeared as *Rosalind* at Crow Street. Up to this time she had played the "young heroines" suitable to her years, and played them with a vivacity that brought

her a good deal of approval; but, upon an emergency, she once played the part of an old woman, a line so eminently fitted to her talent that she was never able to recede from it.

In 1794 she was engaged at Covent Garden to replace Mrs. Webb, and on the 24th September in that year she played *Mrs. Hardcastle*. She was enthusiastically received, being considered greatly superior to the actress whom she superseded. In the same season she played *Lady Wronghead*, *The Nurse* in "*Romeo*," *Miss Spinster*, *Mrs. Drugget*, and other characters of a like character. In the following season she gave her inimitable *Mrs. Malaprop*, and later *Mrs. Quickly* and *Mrs. Peachum*, and for the remainder of the career that lasted until 1830 she enjoyed the very highest reputation both as an actress and a woman. The following description of her merits by a critic of her time gives us a very good idea of her:—"In the vulgar loquacity of the would-be youthful *Mrs. Hardcastle*—the oglings of the antiquated virgin, *Miss Durable*—the imbecility of fourscore in *Mrs. Nicely*—the sturdy brutality of *Mrs. Brulgruddery*—the warm-hearted cottager in "*Lover's Vows*"—the attempted elegances of *Mrs. Dowlas*—the fiery-humoured *Dame Quickly*—and the obtuse intellect of *Deborah*, she overcame all rivalry."

During the life of her husband, Mrs. Davenport lived in great privacy, and after his death, in 1814, she, together with her daughter, retired into practical seclusion. She died on 9th May, 1843, at the age of 78 (or, according to some biographers, 84).

Frances Maria Kelly, who made her farewell appearance at Drury Lane in 1835, was an actress of extraordinary versatility. Unrivalled in melodrama, she was

excellent in "genteel" comedy and domestic tragedy, at the same time achieving considerable success in opera.

She was born at Brighton in 1790, and was the daughter of an officer in the army, a brother of Michael Kelly, the musician and composer, by whom Maria was taught music and dancing. At the age of seven she acted at Drury Lane in her uncle's opera, "*Blue Beard*," under the management of John Kemble. The following year she was enrolled a regular member of the chorus, and in the same year played *The Duke of York* in "*Richard III.*" When, in 1800, she played *Prince Arthur* in "*King John*" she was highly approved by Fox, Sheridan and Mrs. Siddons, who were all agreed as to the remarkable promise she showed. Her timidity when faced by an audience was at first detrimental to her success, but she was able to overcome this weakness, at any rate outwardly, as she progressed in her profession.

Between 1800 and 1806 she performed chiefly in opera, but later she was associated with John and Charles Kemble, Mrs. Siddons, Mrs. Jordan, Mathews, Bannister and many other leading performers in both tragedy and comedy. She was a most reliable, capable actress, who often raised parts of minor importance into prominence. She had plenty of originality, often bringing out unexpected pathos in such characters as *Madge* in "*Love in a Village*" and *Lucy Lockit* in "*The Beggar's Opera.*"

One of her most brilliant triumphs was *Lisette* in "*The Serjeant's Wife*," a popular melodrama. During one scene she was supposed to be witnessing a murder in the adjoining room. In spite of the manager's prognostication of failure, the scene proved an unmitigated success, for Miss Kelly's gesticulations of horror

whilst standing with her back turned to the audience made a tremendous effect that produced rounds of delighted applause.

Maria Kelly was by no means a beautiful woman, but was so attractive she had hundreds of admirers, both known and unknown. One of the latter class, a certain George Barnett, whom she had never met in her life, showed his frenzied adoration by firing a pistol at her from the pit. Fortunately the bullet failed to reach its mark, Barnett being afterwards brought to trial for attempted murder, and acquitted on the ground of insanity. Curiously enough, not long afterwards she was again shot at when performing in Dublin, a bystander being seriously injured.

Miss Kelly acted for thirty-six years at Drury Lane with only occasional appearances elsewhere. She frequently played *Ophelia* to the *Hamlet* of Edmund Kean.

After her departure from Drury Lane, in 1835, she took the New Strand Theatre. Here she gave an entertainment in the form of a monologue, which was highly popular, and with which she later travelled all over the country. With the object of founding a dramatic school for young women, she began to build a model theatre (now the Royalty) behind her private residence, 73 Dean Street, Soho. In 1840 she was persuaded to open the house as a regular theatre, but was obliged to close it after five nights owing to the failure of some machinery. Her dramatic school was highly successful, however, and later on she again opened the theatre and gave occasional performances for seven or eight years. In the end the theatre was seized to pay for her debts. She wrote an account of the affair to the "Times," and received a good deal of sympathy, Lord Brougham assuring her that the

seizure was illegal. Advancing age at length decided her to give up the business, and she retired to a house in Bayswater which she had taken in 1850, having lost all her savings of nearly £16,000. A few years later she removed to Ross Cottage, Feltham, Middlesex, where she died on 6th December, 1882, and was buried in Brompton Cemetery. A few days before her death she was awarded a grant of £150 by the Government, as a result of the good offices of Mr. Gladstone and others. It, however, arrived too late, except to provide for a suitable memorial for her grave.

Charles Lamb and his sister Mary were among Miss Kelly's intimate friends; the former wrote two of his most charming sonnets to celebrate her merits.

Mrs. Gibbs, "one of the best laughers on the stage," was chiefly associated with the Haymarket. On the secession of Mrs. Stephen Kemble, she was engaged to take her place in characters of simplicity and unaffected elegance. Her chambermaids and country-girls were excellent, her figure and face being eminently suited to parts of vivacious humour. In private life she was much loved. Good-humoured, generous and kind-hearted, she was the friend of all those among her fellow-actresses who came to her for advice or assistance.

George Colman the younger, with whom she is said to have been intimately connected for many years, and who ultimately married her, brought her forward in all the best characters suitable to her talents at the Haymarket, and wrote expressly for her the parts of *Mary* in "*John Bull*," *Cicely* in "*The Heir-at-Law*," *Annette* in "*Blue Devils*," and *Grace Gaylove* in "*The Review*." After his death, in 1836, she retired to Brighton, the date of her own decease being unchronicled.

Mrs. West and Mrs. Waylett were cousins. The former was one of the most beautiful women upon the stage, who was at the outset expected to become another Miss O'Neill. She, however, failed to fulfil her early promise, although in parts in which she had to portray her agonies of love, she was fairly successful. Her cousin and contemporary upon the stage, Mrs. Waylett, was one of the best soubrettes of her day. She was almost as popular in ballad-singing as Madame Vestris, and was immensely successful in burlesque and in masculine characters generally. Her life was associated with many scandals, insinuations against her character appearing more than once in the public prints.

In 1818, whilst acting at Coventry, she met Waylett, an actor, and in marrying him secured a worthless husband, from whom she separated a few years after marriage. In 1820 she was at the Adelphi, where she was the original *Amy Robsart* in Planché's adaptation of "*Kenilworth*." She was also the original *Sue* to her husband's *Primefit* in Moncrieff's "*Tom and Jerry*."

In 1823 she was acting in Birmingham under Alfred Bunn, who was supposed to have a weakness for her; on account of some printed insinuations in connection with this, she forced the parties concerned to acknowledge the falsehood of the charges in a letter, and received from them £50 for her "benefit." During her stay at Birmingham she gained a great deal of experience in a long list of parts; among them *Lucy* in "*The Rivals*," *Patch* in "*Busy Body*," *Tattle* in "*All in the Wrong*," *Priscilla Tomboy*, *Chambermaid* in "*Clandestine Marriage*," and *Bizarre* in "*The Inconstant*."

In 1824, bringing with her a large repertory and a good reputation as chambermaid and singer, she

accompanied her manager to Drury Lane, where she appeared as *Madge* in "*Love in a Village*," on the 1st December. In January, 1825, she played *Mrs. Page* in "*The Merry Wives of Windsor*," but her appearances, probably owing to the rivalry and jealousy of Mrs. Bunn, were few and far between. She was at the Haymarket in May, and whilst there originated the part of *Harry Stanley* in "*Paul Pry*." In the following year, 1826, she went to Dublin, where she had a tremendous success. Upon her return she acted at the Haymarket, the Queen's Theatre, Drury Lane, the Olympic, Covent Garden, and in fact there was hardly a house in London where she was not seen. In 1832 she was acting at the Strand, of which house she became sole manager in 1834.

In 1840 her wretched husband, who under the name of Fitzwaylett, had married another woman, died and left his widow free to marry Lee, a musician, and composer of many of her favourite songs. Lee survived her a few months, dying on 8th October, 1851.

Mrs. Waylett's appearances after 1843 became more and more infrequent, and in 1849 she was spoken of as retired. She died in April, 1851.

Julia Glover, who in her closing years was called "the mother of the stage," was one of the first comic actresses of her day. Born in 1779, or, according to some authorities, in 1781, she was the daughter of an actor named Betterton, who claimed to be descended from the great Thomas Betterton. For the first six years of her life she accompanied her father on all his provincial tours, tripping on to the stage as a cupid or fairy almost as soon as she could walk.

In 1789 she joined the York circuit, and under Tate

Wilkinson gained great applause as *The Page* in "*The Orphan*." She appeared at Bath in 1795, and remained there two seasons, playing such exacting parts as *Mariamne* in Reynolds' "*Dramatist*," *Desdemona*, *Lady Macbeth*, and *Lady Amaranth* in "*Wild Oats*." She was next engaged at Covent Garden for five years on terms then considered high, rising from £15 to £20 a week, her father being engaged at the same time. She made her first appearance there on 12th October, 1797, as *Elwina* in Hannah More's "*Percy*," and her second as *Charlotte Rusport* in "*The West Indian*"; the latter performance pleased the author, Cumberland, so much, that he gave her the part of the heroine, *Emily Fitzallan*, in his new play "*False Impressions*." Mrs. Abington (to whom Miss Betterton bore a marked resemblance), Mrs. Crawford, and Mrs. Pope were all acting at Covent Garden during this season, but in spite of this strong competition, the young actress continued to make steady headway. She created the part of *Maria* in T. Dibdin's "*Five Thousand a Year*," in 1799, but for some time she played, under pressure from the management who preferred to give Mrs. H. Johnston her legitimate parts, such serious characters as *Lady Randolph*, *The Queen* in "*Richard III*," etc., for which she was less suited.

In 1800 Miss Betterton married Samuel Glover, a miserable spendthrift who was destined to bring her much unhappiness. She had been deeply in love with an actor whom she had met at Bath, named James Biggs, who, however, died in 1798. His death was a great sorrow from which she did not for some time recover, whilst, to make matters worse, her father began to treat her with great brutality, taking all her salary and making her life a misery. He literally sold her to

Glover, who contracted to pay £1000 for his bargain. This sum was never paid; Glover's representations of having great expectations from a wealthy relative were proved to be false, and Julia Glover's life was made more wretched than ever. Henceforth she had two people to prey upon her instead of one, Glover, soon after the separation which she insisted upon before they had been married many years, bringing an action against the Drury Lane Committee for the amount of her salary. This suit luckily failed, and Mrs. Glover was in the end left in peace to maintain herself and her children, as far as he was concerned, although her father continued to squeeze every penny he could out of her.

In spite of the unhappiness of her private life, however, Mrs. Glover made steady progress in her profession. She played in tragedy, comedy, farce, and burlesque, sometimes at Covent Garden, sometimes at Drury Lane, or other theatres, but her greatest successes were made at the Haymarket in her latter days, by which time she had become identified with the line of characters best suited to her talent. She had a genius for such parts as *Mrs. Candour*, *Mrs. Heidelberg*, *Mrs. Malaprop*, and *Mrs. Subtle*—her joyous laugh and bright, sparkling humour, combined with her truly comic face and somewhat corpulent figure, making her an ideal representative. She was accused of being too violent by some critics, and of being coarse, but the latter accusation could not be maintained. She was not good in tragedy, and it was a relief to her many friends when she dropped it from her répertoire. Her popularity was enormous, both with the public and with her fellow-players, on behalf of whom she was always ready to open her slender purse when occasion demanded.

Her "professional farewell" took place at her "benefit" at Drury Lane, Friday, 12th July, 1850, when she played for the last time as *Mrs. Malaprop*. She had been ill for weeks, and was scarcely able to speak, and on the following Tuesday she died. She was buried near her father in the churchyard of St. George the Martyr, in Queen Square, Bloomsbury.

Mrs. Nisbett, afterwards Lady Boothby, was a beautiful comedienne, whose silvery laugh and irresistible verve and "go" bewitched the town for a little over twenty years. She had an oval face, with a wide and rather low forehead, lustrous eyes, long neck, and lithe, elastic figure, and an abundance of soft, dark hair that formed a fascinating frame for her eager, brilliant face. Long after her retirement from the stage in 1851, old playgoers raved about her various attractions, and refused to believe that she could ever be replaced.

This charming actress came of a good family named Macnamara. Her father, who retired from the army, where he held a commission, to become first a merchant and subsequently an actor, took the name of Mordaunt when he joined the Leicester circuit. His daughter, calling herself Miss Mordaunt, began her public career at Greenwich, where she played *Lady Teazle*. She next joined Macready's company at Bristol, appearing as *Desdemona*, and subsequently joined Raymond's company at the Shakespeare Theatre, Stratford-on-Avon. Here she opened as *Rosalind*, following this up with *Queen Katherine*, *Portia*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Young Norval*, and *Edmund* in "*The Blind Boy*." Her performances were so excellent that engagements for important towns in the provinces were the inevitable result, and thus, by

the time she received her first engagement in the Metropolis, she had acquired some considerable experience.

In 1829 she made her first bow to the London public at Drury Lane, appearing as the *Widow Cheerly*. "To be once seen was to conquer," says one enthusiastic admirer, and certainly the beautiful young actress seems to have captivated her public from the moment she arrived. Her *Miss Hardcastle*, *Lady Amaranth*, *Charlotte* in "*The Hypocrite*," at Drury Lane, followed in 1830 at the Haymarket by her *Lady Teazle*, *Beatrice*, *Lady Contest*, *Lady Racket*, *Letitia Hardy*, and *Miss Tittup*, established her in a position of eminence from which she never receded. She had hundreds of admirers, of course, and to one of these she gave her hand in 1831, temporarily quitting the stage. Her husband, a Captain Nisbett, of Brettenham Hall, Suffolk, died, however, only seven months later from a fall from a horse. His affairs were thrown into Chancery, and some years elapsed before his widow could obtain any provision under his will. She therefore, to the delight of the public, returned to the stage.

In 1832 she reappeared at Drury Lane as the *Widow Cheerly*, receiving a rapturous welcome from her old friends, whom she continued to delight in a round of her famous parts. In 1834 she became nominal manager at the little theatre in Tottenham Street, re-named "the Queen's," at a salary of £20 a week, under two brothers named Bond. One of them was a notorious money-lender, who kept a gambling house in St. James' Street. The following year she went with the Bonds to the Adelphi, but soon returned to the Queen's, where she re-opened with five light pieces, and played in three of them herself. In 1837 she was

engaged by Webster at the Haymarket, and made one of her most conspicuous successes as *Constance* in "*The Love Chase*," by Sheridan Knowles, at its first production on 10th October. In 1839 she was with Madame Vestris at Covent Garden.

All this time, as a beautiful young widow, she had naturally many suitors, and reports as to her being about to marry again were constantly being circulated. Her choice when she did at last do so caused some surprise, for on 15th October she became the wife of Sir William Boothby, Bart., of Ashbourne Hall. He was neither rich nor young, being sixty-two years of age, and it can only be supposed that she was attracted by his title. His experience of married life was again destined to be a short one, for Sir William died in 1846, leaving her once more a widow.

In 1847 she returned again to the stage, and continued to play under different managements until 1851, when her health, which had been failing for some years, completely broke down, and she retired to St. Leonards-on-Sea, where she died of apoplexy in 1858.

Her greatest part had been that of *Constance* in "*The Love Chase*." She was an ideal *Helen* in "*The Hunchback*," and although her *Beatrice* lacked poetry, it carried people away by its gay mischievousness and sheer animal spirits. Her *Lady Teazle* was whimsically brilliant, and although in parts requiring tenderness and passion she was not at her best, she was long remembered as one of the most enchanting actresses in comedy ever seen upon the stage.

Madame Vestris was the daughter of Bartolozzi, the famous Italian engraver. She was born in January, 1797, at 72 Dean Street, Soho, and received a rudi-

mentary education at Manor Hall, Fulham Road, learning music with Dr. Jay and Domenico Corri. In 1813 she married Auguste Armand Vestris, a dancer and ballet-master at the King's Theatre, and, having a remarkably fine contralto voice, she appeared for the first time in opera 20th July, 1815, as *Proserpina* in Peter Winter's opera "*Il Ratto di Proserpina*." She was at this time eighteen years of age, and is said to have had "a countenance expressive rather of modest loveliness than of any very marked passion." Her training was, moreover, deficient, and her voice needed cultivation; but she was very popular even at this early stage of her career, her beauty and grace winning her a great number of admirers.

In the winter season 1816–17 she acted in Italian Opera at the Théâtre Français, Paris, and at other theatres in that city. Whilst in Paris her husband, who had become a bankrupt, and who had cause to suspect her fidelity, left her, and they were never reunited.

In 1820 she appeared at Drury Lane as *Lilla* in the "*Siege of Belgrade*," and from that year until 1831 continued a series of triumphs in opera and comedy at either Covent Garden, Drury Lane, or the Haymarket. She was one of the best singing actresses that ever appeared, and was immensely popular. The town went mad over her singing of "Cherry Ripe," "I've Been Roaming," "Buy a Broom," and other ballads of the same type, and her performances in "breeches parts," *Macheath*, *Cherubino*, and *Don Giovanni*, etc., created an equal sensation. There was a print of her as the last-named, which was displayed in every print-seller's window, and showed off her faultless arms and legs to perfection. She was extraordinarily attractive: her

enormous dark eyes, flexible mouth, and playful manner working great havoc in the hearts of the *jeunesse dorée* of her day. One young scion of a noble house came to hopeless grief over her and ended in the bankruptcy court. When a schedule of his liabilities was drawn up, one of the items was £100,000, "a gift to a female friend," who was no other than the devastating Vestris. Indeed, her career was one of reckless extravagance, regardless of who paid or who lost. One season she owed a bill for £300 for floral bouquets alone. She accepted all homage carelessly, as if it were her due, and, when facing an audience, made a kind of confidential appeal to them which caused them to spoil her more than ever.

In 1831 she opened the Olympic in partnership with Maria Foote, who, however, soon seceded from the management. Whilst at the Olympic she started the first of a long series of burlesques and extravaganzas by giving the burletta "*Clarissa Harlowe*," by Planché. In this class of entertainment Madame Vestris stood alone. She superintended the mounting and decoration herself on every occasion, and her productions became celebrated for the lavish scale on which everything was done. At the Olympic she attained the height of her popularity, her *Pandora* in "*Olympic Revels*" being the crowning triumph of her career.

In 1838 she married Charles James Mathews, who had made his début under her management in 1835, and soon after their marriage they left England together for America. She was, however, not well received there, and was considerably poorer when she returned than when she started. She reappeared at the Olympic as *Fleury* in "*Blue Beard*" in January, 1839, but four months later bade that theatre farewell,

and aided her husband in his management of Covent Garden. In 1846 she accompanied him to the Princess's, and in the following year, 1847, began her famous management of the Lyceum Theatre.

Here Mathews played all his familiar parts, and his wife produced all the best-remembered of Planché's burlesques. William Beverley painted the scenery, and the "transformation scene," beloved of our childhood, was introduced for the first time. Vestris was responsible for many improvements in stage effects and scenery, and had a wonderful taste in all matters connected with dress. The Lyceum during her management became the most fashionable theatre in London. She retired in 1854, making her last appearance at the Lyceum for her husband's "benefit" in "*Sunshine Through Clouds*." She died, after a long and painful illness, on 8th August, 1856, and was buried in Kensal Green Cemetery.

The year 1859 saw the retirement of Mrs. Keeley, one of the best comic actresses of her time. In 1834 she was the chief comic support at the Adelphi, where, in 1838, she made her great success as *Smike*, and in the following year her still greater one as *Jack Sheppard*. She married Robert Keeley, the actor, in 1829, and the couple were never out of an engagement, their combined popularity making them in request wherever they went. In 1844 they took over the management of the Lyceum, which proved a veritable gold-mine. They gave popular pieces—comic farce, extravaganza, and strong domestic drama—and very soon filled the theatre to overflowing. Dickens was then in the very zenith of his popularity, and dramatic versions of his novels were a certain draw. "*Martin Chuzzlewit*" secured a

great success at the Lyceum, running for ninety nights. Keeley was *Sairey Gamp* and Mrs. Keeley was young *Bailey*. Then followed "*The Chimes*," in which Keeley was *Trotty* and his wife *Margaret Veck*. The "Caudle Lectures" was also dramatized, with Keeley as *Mrs. Caudle*. Mrs. Keeley was an actress of great variety, delighting the public equally with her *Jack Sheppard*, *Smike*, *Little Nell*, *Dot*, and the "slavies" of broad farce. She became as great a favourite as ever Fanny Kelly had been, her unconquerable vivacity, combined with her unexpected gift of pathos, taking the hearts of her audience by storm.

The Keeley management came to an end in 1847 in consequence of a disagreement with Arnold, the principal landlord, but they had by that time amassed a considerable fortune. Mrs. Keeley made her last professional appearance upon the stage in 1859 at the Lyceum, although she subsequently played some of her old parts for various "benefits" and delivered addresses by her old friend Joseph Ashby Sterry and others.

On 22nd November, 1895, her ninetieth birthday was celebrated at the Lyceum by a miscellaneous entertainment, in which many leading actors took part. She died on 12th March, 1899, at 10 Pelham Crescent, Brompton, the house in which her husband had died thirty years previously. In her latest years she was fêted and caressed by almost everybody, from the Queen downwards, and her funeral at Brompton Cemetery on 16th March was almost a public ceremonial.

Mrs. Warner and Mrs. Fitzwilliam were two very popular actresses in their own line, the former in tragedy, and the latter in the representation of country-girls and romps.

Mrs. Warner, whose maiden name was Huddart, owed her first engagement at Drury Lane to Macready, who had seen and approved her acting, and recommended her to the manager of that theatre. She appeared there as *Belvidera* to the *Pierre* of Macready, in 1830. *Alicia* in "*Jane Shore*," and *Constance* in "*King John*," were among the parts she played during that season, and at its close she went to Dublin and played leading business under Calcraft. In 1836 she was back at Drury Lane under Bunn's management, and, in 1837, was engaged at the Haymarket. Somewhere about this time she married Robert William Warner, landlord of the Wrekin Tavern, Broad Court, Bow Street, a favourite haunt of actors and literary men.

In 1844 she began her memorable management of Sadler's Wells, in partnership with Phelps, where she played *Mrs. Haller*, *Mrs. Oakley*, *Queen Margaret* in *Richard III*, and many other characters. Her last appearance in England was as *Mrs. Oakley*, in 1851, after which she went to America and made a great success there. She died in England, of cancer, in 1854, after prolonged illness, during which she was assisted through a fund raised by the Queen and Baroness Burdett-Coutts. She was an excellent actress, good in both pathetic and emotional parts. Her chief success was *Evadne* in "*The Bridal*," by Sheridan Knowles, and her *Imogen* was universally recognized as first-rate.

Mrs. Fitzwilliam was a good actress of the Mrs. Jordan school. She was the daughter of Robert Copeland, manager of the Dover theatrical circuit, and was born in 1801. Her first appearance was at the Haymarket in 1817, and she subsequently played at the Surrey and Drury Lane. She married Edward Fitzwilliam in

1822, and afterwards went to Dublin, where she became very popular. In 1844 she was very successful in the dramas at the Adelphi, her *Starlight Bess* in "*The Flowers of the Forest*" raising her to the height of her reputation. She continued to act until the Saturday before her death, the 9th of November, 1854; on the 11th she was seized with cholera, and died that same evening.

Her acting had much sweetness and womanliness, and her rendering of ballads and bravura songs was excellent. Elliston declared that her *Lady Teazle*, on account of its rusticity, was the best he had ever seen.

Miss P. Horton, afterwards Mrs. German Reed, was a member of Webster's Company at the Haymarket from 1840 to 1847. On 16th March, 1840, she acted *Ophelia*, sustaining Macready and Phelps. Of this performance the critic on the "Athenæum" wrote: "The *Ophelia* of Miss P. Horton, which approaches very nearly the wild pathos of the original in one scene, and is touching and beautiful in all." Between 1843 and 1847 she achieved great popularity in the Easter and Christmas pieces of Planché, her fine contralto voice, which she used with much taste and judgment, filling the singing parts to perfection.

In 1844 she married Thomas German Reed, and after acting for a number of years at the Haymarket, Drury Lane, and the Olympic, she made her last regular appearance on the stage in 1858.

In 1855 she opened in London an entertainment called "Miss P. Horton's Illustrative Gatherings." Her varied impersonations were admirable, and she afterwards contributed greatly to the success of "Mr. and Mrs. German Reed's Entertainment," both at the Gallery of Illustration and at St. George's Hall. She

retired from the entertainment in 1877, and died at the residence of her son-in-law, Edward Mitchell, at Bexley Heath, Kent, on 18th March, 1895.

Madame Celeste was the wife of an American named Elliott, who died soon after the marriage. Of French birth and Spanish origin, this graceful, picturesque actress and dancer made a great name for herself in this country. Her first notable performances in London were at the Haymarket under Webster's management, when she took part in such romantic dramas as "*The Wept of the Wishton Wish*," and "*Marie Ducange*." In 1844 she became, in partnership with Benjamin Webster, lessee of the Adelphi Theatre. It was at this period that the Adelphi melodramas reached their highest stage of development.

Madame Celeste's *Miami* in "*The Green Bushes*" was a masterpiece of love, hate, and revenge; she was at her best in the representation of wild, passionate, half-savage natures. She also played the part of *Mrs. Cregan* in "*Colleen Bawn*," the first of the sensational dramas in which a mechanical effect was the principal attraction. On this occasion the transparent stage water, made of blue gauze, filled the Adelphi for hundreds of nights, the actors becoming of quite secondary importance. When the old Adelphi was pulled down in 1858 and a new one raised in its place, Madame Celeste remained only a short time, in consequence of a disagreement with the management. In 1859 she became manager of the Lyceum Theatre, but her two seasons there were unsuccessful. She was found less attractive as she grew older, and the foreign accent, which had hitherto been considered one of her charms, fell into disfavour.

In October, 1874, she took her farewell of the stage in her favourite part of *Miami*, which she played for twelve nights. She died in Paris in 1882.

Mrs. Stirling, almost the last actress to exhibit the old style in comedy, was a brilliantly pretty woman, excellent in her youth in soubrette and low comedy parts, and in her later years in parts such as *Mrs. Candour* and *Mrs. Malaprop*. She was the daughter of Captain Kehl, a military secretary at the War Office, and was born in 1815.

Her first regular engagement was at the Pavilion Theatre at a salary of £3 a week. It was here that she met Edward Stirling, who was playing "walking gentleman" at the time, and soon afterwards she married him and went with him to Liverpool, Manchester, and Birmingham, where she became a great favourite. On her return to London she replaced Mrs. Nisbett at the Adelphi as *Biddy Nutts* in Buckstone's "*Dream at Sea*," a prominent position being assigned to her at the outset. From that time until 1860 she played at a number of the principal theatres. One of her great hits was at the Adelphi as *Sally Snow* in Leman Rede's "*A Flight to America*," in which she sang negro and patter songs, but her greatest success of all was as *Peg Woffington* in "*Masks and Faces*" at the Haymarket in 1852. An attempt to play *Beatrice* at Drury Lane in 1836 resulted in failure, being entirely unsuited to her style of acting. From 1870 her appearances were rare, and she devoted herself principally to reciting and teaching elocution. She lived long enough, however, to play *The Nurse* to the *Juliet* of Ellen Terry and, later, *Martha* to the latter's *Marguerite*. By this time Mrs. Stirling was almost

blind, although she was very clever at concealing the fact. Ellen Terry in her book "The Story of My Life" tells us how Mrs. Stirling, when she let "Mephistopheles" in at the door, used to drop her work on the floor so that she could find her way back to her chair. "I never knew why she dropped it," says Miss Terry, "she used to do it so naturally with a start when 'Mephistopheles' knocked at the door—until one night when it was in my way and I picked it up, to the confusion of poor Mrs. Stirling, who nearly walked into the orchestra." This fine old actress lived to a great age and died in 1895.

CHAPTER XIX

HELEN FAUCIT AND MRS. CHARLES KEAN (ELLEN TREE)

HELEN, or Helena Faucit, whose marriage to Mr. (afterwards Sir) Theodore Martin took place in 1851, was one of the greatest interpreters of poetic drama of modern times. Her claim to be specially remembered by posterity rests upon her impersonations of the heroines of Shakespeare and her wonderful creations in the dramas of Bulwer Lytton, Sheridan Knowles, Browning, and Westland Marston. She was the original *Pauline* in "*The Lady of Lyons*," her celebrated representation of this favourite character remaining a tradition to this day.

Born in 1817, she was the daughter of Savile Faucit, an actor in the Margate company who married Harriet Diddear, the daughter of its manager. Mrs. Faucit, who was herself a very good actress, appeared as *Desdemona* at Covent Garden in 1813, and continued to play important parts at that theatre or at Drury Lane until her retirement in 1824. Six children were born, of whom Helen was the youngest, and no less than five of them found their way to the stage. The sixth, a doctor, died in Australia. There were two daughters, of whom Harriet, eight years older than Helen, appeared at the Haymarket in 1823, and remained upon the stage, chiefly in the provinces, until her death in 1847.

The two girls were bound together by the strongest ties of affection, all the more so, perhaps, on account of the fact that they were almost entirely cut off from their parents during their early years—the father and mother being actively engaged in their profession. The girls were sent to a boarding-school at Greenwich, Helen remaining there for some years after her sister. Even at school the former's dramatic instinct showed itself, her passionate love of Shakespeare taking the form of readings and recitations, sometimes shared by governesses or schoolfellows, but as often as not with only herself as audience. It was the wish of Helen's mother and grandparents that she should not follow the dramatic profession; she was therefore not allowed to put her foot inside a theatre, and her knowledge of Shakespeare's plays was due to her reading alone. To this fact her wonderful originality was afterwards ascribed—the dreaming girl had gone straight to the fountain-head for her impression of the characters she represented, and had not been confused by the ready-made impersonations of the actresses of her day.

Helen Faucit's girlhood was a lonely one once her sister Harriet had gone upon the stage. She had only rare glimpses of her mother, by whom she was always somewhat repelled, and of her father she saw nothing, as he had separated from his wife by this time, taking upon himself the care of the sons, and leaving the daughters to Mrs. Faucit. Helen, however, saw her sister at holiday times, which were spent at a house on Richmond Green, opposite to the theatre at which the younger sister's first appearance was made. Of these holiday hours she always cherished a very loving remembrance.

In her book, "Some of Shakespeare's Female Characters," Miss Faucit, long years afterwards, described how she came to be an actress.

"One hot afternoon my sister and myself, finding it yet too sunny to walk down to the river—we had to pass the theatre on the way—took refuge in the dark, cool place to rest awhile. On the stage was a flight of steps and a balcony, left standing, no doubt, after rehearsal, or prepared for that of the next day. After sitting on the step for a while, my sister exclaimed: 'Why, this might do for *Romeo* and *Juliet's* balcony! Go up, Birdie, and I will be your *Romeo*.' Upon which, amid much laughter, and with no little stumbling over the words, we went through the balcony scene, I being prompter. . . . To our surprise and consternation we learned, some little time after, that there had been a listener. When our friends arrived some days later, the lessee told them that, having occasion to go from the dwelling-house to his private box, he had heard voices, listened, and remained during the time of our merry rehearsal. He spoke in such warm terms of the *Juliet's* voice, its adaptability to the character, her figure—I was tall for my age—and so forth, that in the end he prevailed upon my friends to let me make a trial upon his stage. But I was to be announced simply as 'a young lady—her first appearance.' At the worst, a failure would not matter; and, at any rate, the experiment would show whether I had gifts or not in that direction."

The experiment turned out as successful as could be expected, considering that the *Juliet* was only sixteen years old. Her performance was certainly very much applauded, and she repeated it several times, after

which she went back into retirement and devoted all her attention to completing her education, both general and professional. "A period of upwards of two years," she writes, "spent in quiet had widened my views about many things, *Juliet* included. Still I remained true to my first love, and when it was decided that I should submit myself to the dread ordeal of a London audience to ascertain whether I possessed the qualities to justify my friends in allowing me to adopt the Stage as a profession, I selected *Juliet* for my first appearance." At the last moment, however, it was discovered that no actor could be found young enough to play *Romeo* to her *Juliet*, and the play had to be changed to Sheridan Knowles's play of "*The Hunchback*," Miss Faucit making her début as *Julia* on 5th January, 1835.

The most experienced actress might have been pardoned for extreme nervousness at having at the eleventh hour to exchange a part like *Juliet*—which in Helen Faucit's case had been made a special study—for all the fluctuating moods and violent emotions of Knowles's heroine; we can imagine what it must have been to this novice. She knew that her whole future would be decided by this performance, and that a failure would mean that she would have to relinquish her most cherished ideals. However, fate had decreed that she was not to fail. Although her agitation during the first act prevented her from doing herself justice, the kindness of her audience had considerably emboldened her by the second, whilst the third act was a veritable triumph. At the end of it she was told that the manager had requested to see her friends with a view to arranging for a three years' contract. The night had indeed been a complete success. Charles Kemble,

who held a very high opinion of Miss Faucit, and did everything possible to help and encourage her, played his original part of *Sir Thomas Clifford*, his strong support being invaluable to such a nervous débutante, and contributing largely to the success of her performance.

Next day the press criticisms were full of praise. The "Times" wrote: "Nature has bestowed on this young lady many requisites towards attaining eminence in the profession she has selected. Her figure is good —her features expressive—her voice full and clear. Her enunciation is remarkably distinct, her carriage graceful, and her action, though bordering sometimes on extravagance, is generally 'well suited to the word.'" Another leading journal wrote: "During the whole course of our theatrical experience we have never known a case in which such sanguine hopes were entertained, and we can safely say that in no case have those hopes been more amply realized. Energy, pathos, and grace are the essentials of a tragic actress, and we never saw them more beautifully combined than in the person of the fair débutante. Her figure is excellent; her face is moulded for the stage, and she possesses all the discrimination of an experienced actress, while she exhibits all the freshness of incipient genius. . . . We never were so completely in want of a leading lady, and we 'praise the fates and are thankful' that the blank has been filled up." The correspondent of an American journal declared that Miss Faucit reminded him of Miss O'Neill, with whom, as a matter of fact, she was in subsequent years often compared. This critic wrote: "Helen Faucit has a fine form—graceful, tall, and commanding; it reminds me of what Miss O'Neill was. Her voice is exquisitely

clear—full and mellow in its intonations, and audible in its lowest whisper. But the audience were so enthusiastic that they spoiled much of its effect by applauding her so as to make her pause. When Miss O'Neill made her début the applause was nothing like what Miss Faucit received."

Night after night the young actress repeated this fatiguing part to crowded houses, and every night she was called for after the fall of the curtain, a distinction in those days rarely accorded. The play ran until the 17th, and on the 27th she appeared as *Belvidera* with equal success. When she took the universal call at the end of the performance, "the whole house rose —pit, boxes, and galleries—and evinced the most unqualified satisfaction." Each successive performance strengthened her hold upon the public, and confirmed and justified the high opinion formed by Charles Kemble and other competent judges.

Miss Faucit's performance of *Mrs. Haller*, which followed her *Belvidera*, received some rough handling by the critics, but their opinion was evidently not shared by the public, who continued to support her with unabated enthusiasm. Her next part was that of *Lady Margaret* in Joanna Baillie's play "*Separation.*" It was the first character she had been called upon to originate, and she was naturally very nervous, both before and during the performance. It was characteristic of her resourcefulness and self-command, however, that she was not only able to control her own nervousness on this occasion, but also to assist Charles Kemble, who was acting with her. Kemble, nervous himself and occasionally at a loss for his words, was so deaf that he could not hear the prompter. Whereupon the novice forgot her own terrors and repeatedly

whispered his lines to him, a service for which he afterwards expressed much gratitude.

On the 10th of March "*Romeo and Juliet*" was produced, and Miss Faucit set to work to re-study the part of *Juliet*. Since she had played it at Richmond her mind had greatly expanded, she had made a careful study of the whole play and gained a deeper insight into the character of its heroine. Her performance when the appointed night arrived showed so much originality of conception, and contained so much that was beautiful in the development of the character, that it raised her very high in the estimation of the critics. *Juliet* remained in later years the most successful of all her Shakespearean representations.

Her engagement at Covent Garden lasted until 1839. During that time she added *Portia*, *Desdemona*, *Constance*, *Miranda*, *Beatrice*, *Rosalind*, *Imogen* in "*Cymbeline*," and *Hermione* in "*Winter's Tale*" to her Shakespearean repertory. Besides all these she constantly played new parts in the plays of Sheridan Knowles, Bulwer Lytton, and Browning. It was the preparations for Browning's play "*Strafford*" that brought about a lifelong friendship between him and Miss Faucit. He had a great admiration both for her talent and for her character in private life, whilst she in her turn was quick to realize his genius as a poet.

In 1837 Macready began his management of Covent Garden, Miss Faucit being invaluable to him in his efforts to restore the theatre to its ancient glory. He seems to have been rather churlish in his treatment of the young actress, and it was a long time before she managed to get over her awe of him. Nevertheless, he lost no opportunity of putting her into important parts, knowing that he could do no better service to

the cause he had at heart. Bulwer Lytton's "*Lady of Lyons*" was produced in 1838, Miss Faucit creating the part of *Pauline* and making a tremendous impression. This play ran throughout the season with but little intermission, in spite of some initial want of success, and Miss Faucit was probably the finest *Pauline* of all who have attempted the part.

About this time the strain to which she was subjected—for her name was hardly ever out of the bills—began to tell upon her health. She was simply indefatigable in her profession, never sparing herself in the least, and often, when not actually acting, spending the best part of the night studying some new part. She was a real enthusiast, caring for nothing but her art, and paying no heed to the admiration she excited. She was always learning, always striving to get nearer to the ideals she had set before herself. These ideals were so high, so almost impossible of attainment, that she had little time to be spoiled by flattery. Caroline Fox said of her: "She is full of strength and grace, and, though cold in surface, there is burning Etna beneath." In truth, under all the unpretending gentleness of Helen Faucit, there lay a burning energy of will, a clearness of aim, a determination, as she herself expressed it, "to give the people of her best," that might well be likened to the smouldering fires of a volcano. When the proper moment came, gentleness and diffidence would be thrown to the winds, and, unheeding the directions showered upon her by other people, she would set her soul free to soar towards the goal she coveted. Even Macready, who was a little too fond of trying to mould her, found it impossible to make her surrender her own conception of a character—her ideas remained

unaltered, even though her natural distrust of her own powers might be increased.

In July, 1839, Miss Faucit and Macready were both engaged at the Haymarket, and it was during this season that the former created the part of *Violet* in Bulwer Lytton's "*Sea Captain*." The play owed any success it had to the actors rather than to the author, and the latter was particularly grateful to Miss Faucit for what she had done for his heroine. In the preface to the published play he expressed that gratitude in no measured terms.

By December the constant fatigue and excitement had so told upon the actress that she was ordered a long rest by her doctors, and was sent to Hastings to recoup. Here she was so ill that at one time she even began to consider giving up the profession she adored, but fortunately she gradually recovered her strength, and to the joy of her many admirers was at last well enough to return to town. Her reception, when she reappeared on 25th April, 1840, as *Pauline*, was magnificent, and caused her much gratification.

From 5th October, 1842, to 13th June, 1843, Miss Faucit was at Drury Lane, playing week by week in every play Macready produced until his retirement from management. She was the original *Lady Mabel* in Westland Marston's "*Patrician's Daughter*," a performance that created a tremendous sensation, and was also the heroine in Browning's play "*The Blot on the Scutcheon*." The *Lady* in "*Comus*" was one of her most successful performances during this period, and her *Constance* in "*King John*" and her *Desdemona* won very high praise from the critics. More than thirty years afterwards, when she met Carlyle at Froude's house, the great man delighted her with his

eulogy of her playing of *Desdemona*. He told her that he had never felt the play so deeply as when she played that part. "It quite hurt me to see the fair, delicate creature so brutally used," he added, and by his tone she could see that he meant it.

In 1843 Miss Faucit went to Edinburgh and Glasgow, making a sensation as great as she had made in London. The following year found her in Paris, where she was joined by Macready. The two appeared together at the Salle Ventadour on 22nd December, 1844, in "*Othello*," but Miss Faucit's reception being a great deal warmer than his own, Macready was exceedingly displeased. Subsequent appearances only confirmed this result, and Miss Faucit had to bear the brunt of a good deal of his disappointment. His temper became almost unbearable, and at one point the actress nearly lost all patience with him. "Either Mr. Macready has grown more selfish and exacting," she writes, "or I am less capable of bearing with such ungenerous conduct. In either case I am far better away from him." There could be no doubt as to the verdict of Paris upon her own performances. Her appearance had been heralded by no newspaper paragraphs, by none of the highly coloured panegyrics by which the French were accustomed to have their attention claimed beforehand. Yet that authoritative critic, M. Edouard Thierry, wrote, after her performance of *Desdemona:* "True talent has no need of these editorial and managerial prelusions; unknown before the performance, Miss Faucit was so no longer from the fourth act onward. After the fifth, she was recalled with Macready. She had become as one of our own actresses—a truly French actress." Thierry thought her voice like that of Madame Mars, and her

singular grace of movement reminded him of Fanny Ellsler. "The voice," he said, "is specially in accord with this grace, the sweetness of the organ fits in well with this harmony of demeanour." Victor Hugo, Theophile Gautier, Alexandre Dumas, Regnier, Jules Janin, and many other authoritative critics, all pronounced their verdicts in the same strain. That so young an actress should acquit herself so well in such a diversity of parts—during her stay in Paris she played, besides *Desdemona*, *Ophelia*, *Virginia* in "*Virginius*" of Sheridan Knowles, *Lady Macbeth* and *Juliet*—caused the greatest amazement. Her *Lady Macbeth* in particular made a profound impression upon the Parisian audience. Two days after its first performance, the play having been repeated, Macready wrote in his diary: "The audience applauded Miss Faucit's sleeping scene more than anything else in the whole play."

The young actress's success in Parisian society was as great as upon the stage. At all receptions and soirées she was the star of the evening, expressions of admiration were showered upon her, she was fêted and complimented and flattered, until she almost wearied of it all. Certainly it was bad for her health, for these social doings robbed her of many a good night's sleep. However, she had every reason to be gratified by her reception in Paris, and, even before she left it, offers of engagements from all quarters came pouring in. She gave the preference to Dublin, and agreed to appear there towards the end of the following month.

On her return to London she went to Covent Garden with Calcraft, the Dublin manager, to see whether she approved the part of *Antigone*, when the Greek tragedy was given there. What she saw of it made her decide

to undertake the part, and with her customary thoroughness she set to work to make herself acquainted with some of the Greek masterpieces, and also with Greek costume and the arrangements of the Greek theatre.

She made her first appearance in Dublin on 17th February, 1845, and before performing *Antigone* she played *Mrs. Haller*, *Belvidera*, *Julia* in "*The Hunchback*," and *Lady Mabel*. She was as much appreciated in Dublin as in Scotland and Paris in these characters, but when she played *Antigone* the pens of the ablest critics in Dublin were not able to run over the paper quickly enough to express all that the writers felt. The critic on the "Dublin Times" expressed the general opinion when he wrote: "Were Miss Faucit hitherto without reputation we feel assured that her performance of *Antigone* would at once raise her to that rank which she already indisputably holds, of the greatest amongst the tragic actresses of the day. She possesses that without which no one, and above all no dramatist, ever attained eminence, thorough devotion to her profession, a sense of its dignity, and a determination to dignify herself and it together—a concentration of intellect, genius, time, talents—everything to achieve the greatness that made a Siddons and an O'Neill. . . . To a fine person and most dignified carriage, Miss Faucit unites a chasteness and simplicity of action and gesture that make her at once natural and effective in every situation." Miss Faucit's physical appearance seems to have been particularly suited to the part of *Antigone*. Sir Frederic Burton, Director of the National Gallery, described her thus: "Her head was nobly balanced on a pillar-like neck. Seen in profile, the remarkable expanse between the front of the face and the finely set ear, the length from the chin to the throat, the beautiful

outward curve of the full and pliant lip, all called vividly to mind the Greek ideal known to us in sculpture and in designs on the finer Athenian vases." De Quincey, who saw her *Antigone* a few months later in Edinburgh, went into raptures over it. In a paper on "The Antigone of Sophocles," published in "Tait's Magazine" at the time, he wrote: "Then suddenly—oh, heavens! what a revelation of beauty!—forth stepped, walking in brightness, the most faultless of Grecian marbles—Miss Helen Faucit as *Antigone*. What perfection of Athenian sculpture! the noble figure, the lovely arms, the fluent drapery! What an unveiling of the ideal statuesque! Is it Hebe? is it Aurora? is it a goddess that moves before us? Perfect she is in form; perfect in attitude."

Though occasionally in London, Miss Faucit played chiefly in the country after her visit to Dublin. In August, 1851, she married Mr. (afterwards Sir) Theodore Martin, whom she had first met in Edinburgh in 1843. After her marriage she continued to act for a number of years both in the provinces and in London. Her last regular engagement at a London theatre was at Drury Lane in 1866, after which her appearances were confined to "benefits." She played many times for the benefit of the Royal Theatrical Fund, of the Shakespeare Memorial Theatre and for other charitable objects, and gave readings, one of which in Glasgow was for the sufferers by the failure of the City of Glasgow Bank and produced £500. Her last appearance upon the stage was on the 2nd October, 1879, at Manchester, when she played *Rosalind* for the "benefit" of the widow of Charles Calvert, manager of the Manchester Theatre.

In 1852 Mr. Martin had bought a house in Onslow

Square. Here he and his wife gathered about them a brilliant circle of friends. Thackeray came to live in the Square two years later, and both he and his daughter, Mrs. Richmond Ritchie, became intimate friends of the Martins. Later an acquaintance was formed with Charles Kingsley, and he, together with Matthew Arnold, Froude, Dean Stanley, Nathaniel Hawthorne, and many other distinguished people, joined the company that used to gather round the Martins' dinner-table. In 1865 a house was bought near Llangollen, in North Wales, and the Martins spent a good deal of their time there. They were the frequent guests of Queen Victoria, both at Osborne and at Windsor Castle, Miss Faucit often reading to the Queen in private. In 1880 Mr. Martin was invested with the order of K.C.B., and Miss Faucit was thenceforth known as Lady Martin. Her husband's honours were given him on the occasion of his completion of his "Life of the Prince Consort," a work upon which he had been engaged for many years, and in the writing of which his wife had greatly assisted him.

Lady Martin died in 1898. During her last illness the Queen inquired after her continually both by telegram and letter, and after her death messages of condolence were received from all the members of the Royal Family, from the ex-Empress of the French, and from people in all parts of the kingdom, many of whom had never known her. Although her death occurred in Wales, she wished to be buried in London, the city she had always passionately loved, and whose public had received her so encouragingly when she first appeared upon its boards. She was, therefore, buried in Brompton Cemetery on the 4th November, 1898, followed to the grave by an immense crowd of friends

and admirers. A marble pulpit was erected to her memory in the nave of the Holy Trinity Church, Stratford-on-Avon.

Mrs. Charles Kean, excellent actress and admirable wife, was the daughter of a Mr. Tree, of Lancaster Buildings, St. Martin's Lane, and was born in 1805. Like her husband she met with a good deal of opposition in the earlier days of her career, but by dint of hard work and indomitable perseverance she overcame all obstacles and remains to this day one of the traditions of the Stage.

Towards the close of the season 1822–3 she appeared at Covent Garden in an operatic version of "*Twelfth Night*," playing *Olivia* to the *Viola* of her sister Maria, an actress of some position. She next appeared at Bath in 1824 as *Lydia Languish*, and followed this up with *Charlotte* in "*The Hypocrite*," but failed to gain approval. Genest, who witnessed the latter performance, dismisses her with: "Miss E. Tree spoilt the play—she should have begun with smaller parts." In spite of this luke-warm reception, however, Miss Tree continued to play leading comedy parts at Bath, including *Lady Clara* in "*Charles the Second*," *Agnes* in "*A Woman Never Vext*," and *Letitia Hardy* in "*The Belle's Stratagem.*" The general feeling when she left Bath was that she was no great loss, but subsequent events proved otherwise.

After some practice in Birmingham, whereby she profited greatly, Ellen Tree was engaged at Drury Lane in September, 1826, and appeared there as *Violante* in "*The Wonder*" with pronounced success. Remaining at Drury Lane for the two following seasons, she made great strides in public favour in a round of leading parts such as *Letitia Hardy*, *Lady Teazle*,

MRS. CHARLES KEAN (ELLEN TREE).

(As Mrs. Cregan in "Eily O'Connor.")

Miranda in "*The Busybody*," *Charlotte* in "*The Hypocrite*," *Miss Hardcastle*, and *Angelica* in "*Love for Love*." In comedy she was acknowledged to be first-rate, her genuine humour and provocative mirth delighting her audiences night after night. She, unfortunately, made occasional appearances in such serious parts as *Jane Shore* and *Cora* in "*Pizarro*," but she lacked the necessary imagination and intensity, and these performances were decided failures.

In 1829 she transferred her services to the rival house, then under the ruinous management of Charles Kemble. Here she appeared as *Lady Townly*, on October 6th, with considerable success, and on the 10th created the part of *Lady Elizabeth Grey* in the "*First of May*," a comedy by Isabel Hill, which, although much too long, ran for eleven nights.

During her stay at Covent Garden, Ellen Tree played *Romeo* to the *Juliet* of Fanny Kemble. The latter declared that it was the only occasion on which she acted *Juliet* to a *Romeo* who *looked* the part. She wrote: "Miss Ellen Tree looked beautiful and not unmanly in the part; she was broad-shouldered as well as tall, and her long limbs had the fine proportions of the huntress Diana; altogether she made a very pretty fellow." She fenced very well, moreover, and acquitted herself manfully in her duel with *Tybalt*. "The only hitch in the usual 'business' of the part," says Fanny Kemble, "was between herself and me, and I do not imagine the public, for one night, were much aggrieved by the omission of the usual clap-trap performance (part of Garrick's interpolation, which indeed belongs to the original story, but which Shakespeare's true poet's sense discarded) of *Romeo's* plucking *Juliet* up from her bier and rushing with her, still stiff and

motionless in her death-trance, down to the footlights. This feat Miss Tree insisted upon attempting with me, and as I was a very slender-looking girl, but very heavy for all that I stoutly resisted all her entreaties to let me do so. . . . Finding that all argument and remonstrance was unavailing, and that Miss Tree, though by no means other than a good friend and fellow-worker of mine, was bent upon performing this gymnastic feat, I said at last: 'If you attempt to lift or carry me down the stage I will kick and scream till you set me down,' which ended the controversy. I do not know whether she believed me, but she did not venture upon the experiment."

In 1836 Miss Tree went to America, where she remained until 1839. Her appearances there were a long series of triumphs, many of them being made in additions to her répertoire such as *Rosalind*, *Beatrice*, *Portia*, *Juliet*, *Mrs. Haller* and *Mrs. Oakley*. On her return to Covent Garden in 1839 she brought with her an enormously widened experience and a confidence begotten of the appreciation she had received upon the other side of the Atlantic. Her reception upon her reappearance in London was all that could be desired, her creation of the part of the *Countess* in Sheridan Knowles's "*Love*" arousing great enthusiasm. She was at this time a very beautiful woman, with classical features, a little too strongly marked perhaps, and an expression both intellectual and refined. She was essentially womanly and sympathetic in her art. A writer in the "Athenæum," of 16th April, 1842, declared her to be the most gentle and effective *Mrs. Beverley* on the stage. Westland Marston gave it as his opinion that "in sympathetic emotion as distinguished from stern and turbulent passion no feminine

artist of her time surpassed her." Her *Lady Evelina* was noble as well as gentle, her *Viola*, *Constance* and *Katharine* were remarkably fine performances, whilst her *Gertrude* in "*Hamlet*" was perfect.

This was the matured actress of established reputation whom Charles Kean had the good fortune to marry on 29th January, 1842. The ceremony took place in Dublin, the bride that same evening playing *Juliana* in "*The Honeymoon*"! This marriage turned out to be a fortunate one for Charles Kean in more ways than one. Not only did he secure a sympathetic companion, but a strong, capable supporter throughout all his subsequent trials and difficulties, who exercised over him "a constant and affectionate vigilance that warded from him many shafts and disarmed much prejudice." Such was Helen Faucit's testimony to the admirable qualities of an actress for whom she had the greatest respect. When Talfourd's "*Ion*" was produced, the creation of the part of *Clemanthe* was given to Ellen Tree, who played it for one night only, Miss Faucit taking it up on the subsequent nights. The latter was naturally a little mortified at this arrangement. "I had a long letter from Mr. Osbaldiston," she writes, "asking me to do the part of *Clemanthe* in Sergeant Talfourd's new play. My friends say decidedly I *shall not*, nor do I think he ought to ask me. The part is very bad I hear; but that is not the worst part of the story. Miss Tree is to play it the first night, and get what little credit there may be in acting the part, and I am to be made a convenience of, and take what she leaves. It hurts and annoys me so much when I think of it that I had best not think of it any more. I suppose in the end I shall feel obliged to do it. . . ." She went to the first performance, however, to see Miss Tree create the

part, and with characteristic generosity wrote afterwards: "Miss Tree looked and acted most sweetly. *It is a very bad part*, but she made a great deal more of it than I shall be able to do."

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Kean made a good many successful appearances together at the Haymarket during the next few years, the latter playing many Shakespearean characters, and creating, on 4th June, 1842, the character of *Olivia* in Sheridan Knowles's "*Rose of Aragon*." Her history from now onwards became merged in that of her husband, whom she accompanied to America and on all his provincial tours, playing the heroines in the pieces in which he appeared.

In 1850 Charles Kean, in partnership with Robert Keeley (who, however, retired from it in 1851), began his famous management of the old Princess's Theatre in Oxford Street. It is chiefly remembered for his acclimatization of the higher school of French melodrama and for his "archæological" revivals of Shakespeare. In the latter he had been anticipated by Charles Kemble and Macready, at Covent Garden and Drury Lane, the latter having left little to improve upon. His management was, however, the beginning of an important era in theatrical history, and to the constant advice and encouragement of his wife much of its brilliancy was undoubtedly due.

"*Twelfth Night*" was chosen for the initial performance, Mrs. Charles Kean playing the part of *Viola*. Then came Lovel's "*Wife's Secret*," followed by a revival of "*Henry IV.*" It was "*Pauline*," however, a powerful drama founded by Oxenford upon one of Dumas' shorter stories, that created the sensation of the season. Mrs. Charles Kean played the name-part with distinction, and the audience was so thrilled with

the piled-up sensational incidents that the applause was terrific. It is said that the Queen was so excited over one of the scenes that she held the curtains of her box convulsively grasped until the situation was past! "*Pauline*" and the success of an even more notable production, "*The Corsican Brothers*," which soon followed, gallicized our stage for a generation. The latter absorbing melodrama, free from the old noisy elements of the English school, fascinated playgoers so much that they eagerly demanded more of the same kind of fare.

Some of the parts created by Mrs. Charles Kean during her husband's management, besides *Pauline*, included *Mlle. Belle Isle* in "*The Duke's Wager*," *Anne Blake* in Westland Marston's play of that name, *Dorothy Budd* in Jerrold's "*St. Cupid*," *Myrrha* in "*Sardanapolis*," and *Isoline* in "*The Templar.*" In his Shakespearean revivals she played *Desdemona*, *Lady Macbeth*, *Hermione*, *Constance* in "*King John*," *The Queen* in "*Richard III*," *Queen Katharine* in "*Henry VIII*," and, in the last of the revivals, the *Chorus* in "*Henry V.*"

When the Keans first started these revivals it was just at a time when the theatre had reached its lowest ebb in public estimation, and had, indeed, become fatally unfashionable. With one or two exceptions, the West-End houses staged their productions in the shabbiest and most slovenly manner, both dresses and scenery being dingy and primitive. Charles Kean made a brave attempt at reforming these things. Many of his revivals, although surpassed in magnificence by Irving's at the Lyceum later on, had very decided merits of their own. Kean's management, although artistically successful, came, in 1858, to an abrupt end.

In the 'fifties the time for gorgeous Shakespearean revivals was hardly ripe. The runs of plays were not long enough, the Princess's was too small and the prices were too low (six shillings was the highest price for a seat) for such costly productions to be remunerative. In mechanical devices the productions at this little theatre were at a disadvantage compared with the spectacular revivals of later days; limelight was only just introduced, and electric light was unknown for stage effects. The art of building up such a scene as the hall of Macbeth's castle, as seen later at the Lyceum, had not been acquired, but, nevertheless, Henry Irving followed very closely in Charles Kean's footsteps, and found many of his predecessor's ideas not unworthy of imitation.

Mrs. Charles Kean remained upon the stage until her husband's death, which occurred in 1868, just one year after his retirement. In her latter days she lost a good deal of her attractiveness on the stage. One writer says: "I have read and heard the highest eulogies passed upon Mrs. Charles Kean, but when I saw her, in 1856, she was very stout and *passée*, with a thin, high-pitched voice that grated upon the ear, and her acting was a disappointment. Few actresses, however, retain their powers after a certain age, Miss Helen Faucit being a notable exception." This criticism may have been just as regards Mrs. Charles Kean's acting—it is certain that she continued to perform such characters as *Beatrice* and *Portia* far too long—but her wonderful elocution, the power and sweetness of her voice, remained with her to the end.

As has been already said, her character as a wife was beyond all praise. During the last years of her husband's life, although he was but fifty-seven when he

died, she fussed over him with a maternal solicitude that communicated itself to all about him, and led to almost ridiculous precautions being taken to guard against his taking a chill. When they were in Dublin, in 1863, green baize was laid down upon the stage at rehearsal, the gas was lighted, and the stage enclosed. "His memory was growing treacherous," Squire Bancroft tells us, "especially in long soliloquies; as, for instance, the fall of Wolsey; either Cathcart or Everett would then be always at the wings to prompt him, while Mrs. Kean, ever the most devoted woman in the world, would hover round the scenes to stop the smallest noise. One night I witnessed a very comic incident, through her absolutely insisting on a member of the company, who was crossing the back of the stage on tip-toe, taking off his shoes *because they creaked*, and continuing his journey to the stage-door in his stockinged feet."

What Charles Kean owed to his wife during his management of the Princess's it would be impossible to estimate. In many ways she was the leading spirit, if not in absolute command. Ellen Terry, whose first engagement was with the Keans in 1856, as a child, gives a delicious description of the famous couple at rehearsals. She says in "The Story of My Life": "Mr. Kean used to sit in the stalls at rehearsals with a loud-voiced dinner-bell by his side, and when anything went wrong on the stage, he would ring it ferociously, and everything would come to a stop, until Mrs. Kean, who always sat on the stage, had set right what was wrong. She was more formidable than beautiful to look at, but her wonderful fire and genius were none the less impressive because she wore a white handkerchief round her head and had a very

beaky nose! How I admired and loved and feared her! Later on the fear was replaced by gratitude, for no woman ever gave herself more trouble to train a young actress than did Mrs. Kean. . . . Her patience and industry were splendid." In another place Ellen Terry gives us a vivid picture of her, which for us must be a final one. "Devoted to her art," she says, "conscientious to a degree in mastering the spirit and details of her part, Mrs. Kean also possessed the personality and force to chain the attention and indelibly imprint her rendering of a part on the imagination. When I think of the costume in which she played *Hermione*, it seems marvellous to me that she could have produced the impression that she did. . . . No matter what the character was that Mrs. Kean was assuming, she always used to wear her hair drawn flat over forehead and twisted tight round her ears in a kind of circular sweep . . . and then the amount of petticoats she wore! Even as *Hermione* she was always bunched out by layer upon layer of petticoats, in defiance of the fact that classical parts should not be dressed in a superfluity of raiment. But if the petticoats were full of starch, the voice was full of pathos—and the dignity, simplicity and womanliness of Mrs. Charles Kean's *Hermione* could not have been marred by a far more grotesque costume."

Mrs. Charles Kean was greatly reverenced by the young actresses of the rising generation, her praise being eagerly coveted. When Mrs. Bancroft made her great hit as *Jenny Northcott* in W. S. Gilbert's "*Sweethearts*," in 1875, she was especially gratified to receive a complimentary letter from the veteran actress. Mrs. Kean's health was failing at that time, but she had managed to get to the theatre to witness this

performance, and afterwards wrote: "Allow me now to thank you much for the enjoyment you afforded me by your charming acting as *Jenny Northcott*. Perhaps it may not be unpleasing to know that a very old actress thought it perfection. Your style is all your own, and touchingly true to nature." Five years later, on 20th August, 1880, Mrs. Charles Kean passed away at the age of seventy-five, leaving behind her a reputation that is warmly respected to this day.

CHAPTER XX

THOSE THAT CAME AFTER

BEFORE the period which is covered by the present book had quite expired, four infants, who were afterwards destined to achieve greatness on the stage, were already "mewling and puking in the nurse's arms."

One of them indeed, Adelaide Biddles, better known as Mrs. Charles Calvert, may almost be said actually to belong to the period, for she made her first appearance on the stage in 1842, at the age of seven. Her later achievements are well known, and it is wonderful to think that she appeared in Sir Herbert Tree's recent revival of "*Henry VIII*" at His Majesty's Theatre.

Of the other three, Ellen Terry, born in 1848, made her début as an actress at the Princess's Theatre under Mrs. Charles Kean, as *Mamillius* in "*The Winter's Tale*," and as *Prince Arthur* in "*King John*." In December, 1878, when she appeared as *Ophelia* at the Lyceum Theatre for the first time, began her long association with the late Sir Henry Irving.

A year later than Miss Terry, in 1849, was born Mrs. Kendal, sister of the famous dramatist T. W. Robertson. Her London début was made on 29th July, 1865, at the Haymarket Theatre, when she played *Ophelia* to the *Hamlet* of Walter Montgomery. Her creation of the part of *Lilian* in "*New Men and Old*

Acres," raised her to a high position among the comediennes of the day.

In the 'seventies Mrs. Kendal was with the Bancrofts at the Prince of Wales' Theatre during their management there. Lady (then Mrs.) Bancroft was the fourth of those mentioned above as having been born before the expiration of our period. Her first appearance in London was in September, 1856, at the Lyceum, when she played the *boy* in "*Belphegor*." Among the parts with which she has been most closely associated are *Polly Eccles*, *Peg Woffington* and *Lady Teazle*. She married Mr. (now Sir) Squire Bancroft in 1867.

To-day we have stars that shine as brightly as ever they did a hundred and more years ago. Times have changed, and the art of acting has changed with them. But a hundred years hence posterity will look back and see no break in the long line of famous actresses who have adorned our stage.

APPENDIX

SOME OF THE CHIEF CHARACTERS REPRESENTED BY THE STARS OF THE PERIOD

MRS. CIBBER

b. *c.* 1715—d. 1765

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
Arpasia	Irene	Dr. Johnson, 1749
Cassandra	Agamemnon	Thomson, 1738
Cornelia	Siege of Aquilea	Home, 1760
Caelia	School for Lovers	Whitehead, 1762
Elvira	Elvira	Mallet, 1763
Euanthe	Agis	Home, 1758
Fidelia	Foundling	Moore, 1748
The Lady	Comus	Altered from Milton by Dr. Dalton, 1738
Rutland	Earl of Essex	Jones, 1753
Thyra	Athelstan	Dr. Brown, 1756
Venusia	Boadicea	Glover, 1753
Virginia	Virginia	Crisp, 1754
Zaphira	Barbarossa	Dr. Brown, 1754
Also :—		
Ophelia, Desdemona, Lady Anne in "Richard III," Juliet, Perdita		
Statira	Rival Queens	Lee, 1677
Eudocia	Siege of Damascus	Hughes, 1720
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682
Almeria	Mourning Bride	Congreve, 1697
Laetitia	Old Batchelor	Congreve, 1693
Elvira	Spanish Fryar	Dryden, 1681
Arpasia	Tamerlane	Rowe, 1702
Alicia	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Leonora	Revenge	Young, 1721
2nd Constantia	Chances	Duke of Buckingham, 1667
Isabella	Fatal Marriage	Southerne, 1694
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Estifania	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife	Fletcher, 1624
	Etc., etc., etc.	

GEORGE ANNE BELLAMY

b. 1731—d. 1788

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
Blanche	Papal Tyranny	Cibber, 1745
Erixene	Brothers	Cumberland, 1769
Fulvia	Constantine	Dr. Francis, 1754
Virginia	Appius	Moncrieff, 1755
Volumnia	Coriolanus	Thomson, 1749
Lucinda	Englishman Returned from Paris	Foote, 1756

Also :—

Juliet, Cordelia, Desdemona, Lady Macbeth, Constance, and

Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Aspatia	Maid's Tragedy	Beaumont and Fletcher, 1666
Lavinia	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682
Indiana	Conscious Lovers	Steele, 1722
Imoinda	Oroonoko	Southerne, 1696
Alicia	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Rutland	Earl of Essex	Jones, 1753
Elvira	Spanish Fryar	Dryden, 1681
Arpasia	Tamerlane	Rowe, 1702
Roxana	Rival Queens	Lee, 1677
Almeria	Mourning Bride	Congreve, 1697
Andromache	Distressed Mother	A. Phillips, 1712
Lavinia	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Lady Froth	Double Dealer	Congreve, 1693
Estifania	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife	Fletcher, 1663
Leonora	Revenge	Young, 1721
Lady Randolph	Douglas	Home, 1757
Millamant	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700
Marcia	Virginia	Crisp, 1745
Miss Prue	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695

Etc., etc., etc.

PEG WOFFINGTON

b. 1720—d. 1760

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
CHARLOTTE	WEDDING DAY	FIELDING, 1743
LAETITIA	ASTROLOGER	RALPH, 1744
ROSETTA	FOUNDLING	MOORE, 1748
VETURIA	CORIOLANUS	THOMSON, 1749
LADY RANDOLPH	DOUGLAS	HOME, 1757
Others :—		
Lady Betty Modish	Careless Husband	Cibber, 1704
Sir Harry Wildair	Constant Couple	Farquhar, 1699
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Millamant	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700
Mrs. Frail	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Mrs. Conquest	Lady's Last Stake	Cibber, 1707
Mrs. Loveit	Man of Mode	Etheredge, 1676
Charlotte	Refusal	Cibber, 1721
Phillis	Conscious Lovers	Steele, 1722
Cherry	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Lady Brute	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Mrs. Sullen	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Clarissa	Confederacy	Vanburgh, 1705
Isabella	Fatal Marriage	Southerne, 1694
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Polly Peachum	Beggar's Opera	John Gay, 1728
Laetitia	Old Bachelor	Congreve, 1693
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Lady Sadlife	Double Gallant	Cibber, 1707
Estifania	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife	Fletcher, 1624
Widow Lackit	Oroonoko	Southerne, 1696
	Etc., etc., etc.	

KITTY CLIVE

b. 1711—d. 1785

Original :—		
PHILLIDA	LOVE IN A RIDDLE	CIBBER, 1729
NELL	DEVIL TO PAY	COFFEY, 1731
DORCAS	MOCK DOCTOR	FIELDING, 1732

KITTY CLIVE—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Miss Jenny	Boarding School	Coffey, 1733
Lappet	Miser	Fielding, 1733
Lettice	Intriguing Chambermaid	Fielding, 1734
Miss Lucy	Virgin Unmask'd	Fielding, 1735
Peg	Cure for a Scold	Worsdale, 1735
Miss Lucy	Lethe	Garrick, 1740
Mrs. Hazard	Rehearsal	Mrs. Clive, 1750
Mrs. Cadwallader	Author	Foote, 1757
Slipslop	Upholsterer	Murphy, 1758
Kitty	High Life Below Stairs	Townley, 1759
Muslin	Way to Keep Him	Murphy, 1760
Lady Freelove	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761
Lady Beverley	School for Lovers	Whitehead, 1762
Mrs. Friendly	Dupe	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Mrs. Heidelberg	Clandestine Marriage	Colman, 1766

Also:—

Miss Jenny	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Miss Prue	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Silvia	Old Batchelor	Congreve, 1693
Phillis	Conscious Lovers	Steele, 1722
Polly Peachum	Beggar's Opera	John Gay, 1728
Flippanta	Confederacy	Vanburgh, 1705
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Lady Froth	Double Dealer	Congreve, 1693
Mrs. Brittle	Amorous Widow	Betterton, 1670
Olivia	Plain Dealer	Dryden, 1674
Mrs. Loveit	Man of Mode	Etheredge, 1676
Miss Notable	Lady's Last Stake	Cibber, 1707
Lady Lurewell	Constant Couple	Farquhar, 1699
Victoria	Lying Lover	Steele, 1703
Mrs. Frail	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Lady Wishfor't	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700
Edging	Careless Husband	Cibber, 1704

Etc., etc., etc.

MRS. PRITCHARD

b. 1711—d. 1768

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
Flora	Cure for a Scold	Worsdale, 1735
Lady Loverule	Merry Cobbler	Coffey, 1735
Eugenia	Trick for Trick	Fabian, 1735
Selima	Zara	Aaron Hill, 1736
Mrs. Freelove	Connoisseur	Conolly, 1736
Delia	Universal Passion	Miller, 1737
Lady Smart	Polite Conversation	Swift, 1740
Clarinda	Wedding Day	Fielding, 1743
Constance	Papal Tyranny	Cibber, 1745
Tag	Miss in Her Teens	Garrick, 1747
Clarinda	Suspicious Husband	Hoadley, 1747
Irene	Irene	Dr. Johnson, 1749
Merope	Merope	Aaron Hill, 1749
Horatia	Roman Father	Whitehead, 1750
Mrs. Beverley	Gamester	Moore, 1753
Boadicea	Boadicea	Glover, 1753
Creusa	Creusa	Whitehead, 1754
Agisistrata	Agis	Home, 1758
Constantia	Desert Island	Murphy, 1760
Mrs. Oakley	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761
Hecuba	Hecuba	Delap, 1761
Queen	Elvira	Mallet, 1763
Lady Medway	Discovery	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Mrs. Etherdown	Dupe	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Dame Ursula	Falstaff's Wedding	Kenrick, 1766
Mrs. Mildmay	Widowed Wife	Kenrick, 1767

Also :—

Lady Macbeth, Lady Capulet, Mrs. Ford, Queen in "Hamlet," Viola, Lady Macduff, Imogen, Beatrice, Portia, Rosalind, Desdemona, Hypolita, Queen Katharine, Paulina.

Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Eudocia	Siege of Damascus	Hughes, 1720
Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Lady	Comus	Altered from Milton by Dr. Dalton, 1738
Andromache	Distressed Mother	A. Phillips, 1712

MRS. PRITCHARD—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Mrs. Termagant	Squire of Alsatia	Shadwell, 1688
Julia	Fatal Marriage	Southerne, 1694
Mrs. Flareit	Love's Last Shift	Cibber, 1696
Lady Fidget	Country Wife	Wycherley, 1673
Millamant	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700
Lady Betty Modish	Careless Husband	Cibber, 1704
Belinda	Old Batchelor	Congreve, 1693
	Etc., etc., etc.	

MRS. YATES

b. 1728—d. 1787

Original :—

MARCIA	VIRGINIA	CRISP, 1754
LADY FRANKLAND	PLATONIC LADY	MRS. CENTLIVRE, 1706
SANDANE	AGIS	HOME, 1758
CLARISSA	CHOISE	MURPHY, 1765
HARRIET	UPHOLSTERER	MURPHY, 1758
MANDANE	ORPHAN OF CHINA	MURPHY, 1759
MEDEA	MEDEA	GLOVER, 1767
MRS. LOVEMORE	WAY TO KEEP HIM	MURPHY, 1760
BELINDA	ALL IN THE WRONG	MURPHY, 1761
ARAMINTA	SCHOOL FOR LOVERS	WHITEHEAD, 1762
MRS. KNIGHTLY	DISCOVERY	MRS. SHERIDAN, 1763
SOPHIA	BROTHERS	CUMBERLAND, 1769
ISMENA	TIMANTHES	HOOLE, 1770
CLEMENTINA	CLEMENTINA	Attributed to KELLY, 1771
ZOBEIDE	ZOBEIDE	CRADOCK, 1771
SEMIRAMIS	SEMIRAMIS	AYSCOUGH, 1776
EDWINA	BATTLE OF HASTINGS	CUMBERLAND, 1778
BERINTHIA	TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH	SHERIDAN, 1777
MARGARET OF ANJOU	EARL OF WARWICK	DR. FRANKLIN, 1766

Also :—

LADY MACBETH, CONSTANCE, CLEOPATRA, IMOGEN, DESDEMONA, PERDITA, ROSALIND, CORDELIA

Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Zara	Zara	Aaron Hill, 1736
Lady Randolph	Douglas	Home, 1757

MRS. YATES—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Lady Lurewell	Constant Couple	Farquhar, 1699
Lady Jane Gray	Lady Jane Gray	Rowe, 1715
Roxana	Rival Queens	Lee, 1677
Imoinda	Oroonoko	Southerne, 1696
Eudicia	Siege of Damascus	Hughes, 1720
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Mrs. Oakley	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761
Mrs. Cadwallader	Author	Foote, 1757

Etc., etc., etc.

ANNE BARRY

b. 1734—d. 1801

Original:—

Mrs. Harley	False Delicacy	Kelly, 1768
Zenobia	Zenobia	Murphy, 1768
Rivine	Fatal Discovery	Home, 1769
Tragic Muse	Jubilee	Attributed to Garrick, 1769
Miss Montagu	Word to the Wise	Kelly, 1770
Almida	Almida	Mme. Celisia, 1771
Evanthe	Timon altered	Hull, 1786
Grecian Daughter	Grecian Daughter	Murphy, 1772
Sethona	Sethona	Dow, 1774
Eleanora	Edward and Eleanora	Thomson, 1739
Ethelswida	Alfred	Home, 1778
Deianira	Royal Suppliants	Dr. Delap, 1781

Others:—

Juliet, Rosalind, Desdemona, Beatrice, Constance in "King John," Cordelia,

and

Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Andromache	Distressed Mother	Ambrose Phillips, 1712
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682

ANNE BARRY—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Imoinda	Oroonoko	Southerne, 1696
Miranda	Busy Body	Mrs. Centlivre, 1709
Mrs. Conquest	Lady's Last Stake	Cibber, 1707
Biddy Tipkin	Tender Husband	Steele, 1705
Almeria	Mourning Bride	Congreve, 1697
Polly Peachum	Beggar's Opera	John Gay, 1728
Zara	Zara	Aaron Hill, 1736
Indiana	Conscious Lovers	Steele, 1722
Statira	Rival Queens	Lee, 1677
Lady Randolph	Douglas	Home, 1757
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Alicia	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Mrs. Beverley	Gamester	Moore, 1753
Mandane	Orphan of China	Murphy, 1759
	Etc., etc., etc.	

MRS. ABINGTON

b. 1737—d. 1815

Original:—		
BETTY	CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE	COLMAN, 1766
FATIMA	CYMON	GARRICK, 1767
LADY ALTON	ENGLISH MERCHANT	COLMAN, 1767
NARCISSA	WIDOWED WIFE	KENRICK, 1767
LADY BETTY LAMBTON	FALSE DELICACY	KELLY, 1768
CHARLOTTE	HYPOCRITE	BICKERSTAFFE, 1768
CHARLOTTE RUSPORT	WEST INDIAN	CUMBERLAND, 1771
BEATRICE	'TIS WELL IT'S NO WORSE	BICKERSTAFFE, 1770
LADY BAB LARDOON	HIGH LIFE BELOW STAIRS	TOWNLEY, 1759
LAETITIA	CHOLERIC MAN	CUMBERLAND, 1774
ARABELLA	AUTHOR	FOOTE, 1757
MISS HOYDEN	TRIP TO SCARBOROUGH	SHERIDAN, 1777
LADY TEAZLE	SCHOOL FOR SCANDAL	SHERIDAN, 1777
LADY MARY WOODLEY	TIMES	MRS. GRIFFITHS, 1779
LADY RENTLESS	DISSIPATION	ANDREWS, 1781
MISS TITTUP	BON TON	GARRICK, 1775

MRS. ABINGTON—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Also :—		
	BEATRICE, PORTIA, DESDEMONA	
Estifania	Rule a Wife and Have a Wife	Fletcher, 1663
Miss Prue	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Lady Pliant	Double Dealer	Congreve, 1693
Mrs. Termagant	Squire of Alsatia	Shadwell, 1688
Lucy Lockit	Beggar's Opera	John Gay, 1728
Cherry	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Mrs. Sullen	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Fair Lady	Lethe	Garrick, 1740
Kitty	High Life Below Stairs	Townley, 1759
Mrs. Cadwallader	Author	Foote, 1757
Widow Bellmour	Way to Keep Him	Murphy, 1760
Peggy	Country Girl	Garrick, 1766
Millamant	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700
Lettice	Intriguing Chambermaid	Fielding, 1734
Lydia Languish	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Bisarre	The Inconstant	Farquhar, 1702
Biddy Tipkin	Tender Husband	Steele, 1705
Lappet	Miser	Fielding, 1733
Mrs. Oakley	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761
	Etc., etc., etc.	

MISS FARREN

b. *c.* 1759—d. 1829

Original :—		
ROSARA	SPANISH BARBER	COLMAN, 1777
NANCY LOVELL	SUICIDE	COLMAN, 1778
LADY SASH	CAMP	TICKALL, 1778
MISS LOVELESS	MINIATURE PICTURE	LADY CRAVEN, 1780
CECILIA	CHAPTER OF ACCIDENTS	MISS LEE, 1780

MISS FARREN—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Dorinda	Generous Impostor	O'Beirne, 1780
Sophia	Lord of the Manor	Burgoyne, 1780
Macaria	Royal Suppliants	Dr. Delap, 1781
Lady Harriet Trifle	Divorce	Jackman, 1781
Almeida	Fair Circassian	Pratt, 1781
Ophelia Wyndham	School for Variety	Pratt, 1783
Louisa	Reparation	Andrews, 1784
Lady Harriet	Two Connoisseurs	Hayley, 1784
Lady Morden	Seduction	Holcroft, 1787
Lady Paragon	Natural Son	Cumberland, 1784
Lady	I'll Tell You What	Mrs. Inchbald, 1785
Lady Emily Gayville	Heiress	Burgoyne, 1786
Countess	False Appearances	Gen. Conway, 1789
Eliza Ratcliffe	Jew	Cumberland, 1794
Emily Tempest	Wheel of Fortune	Cumberland, 1795
Lady Ruby	First Love	Cumberland, 1795

Also:—

Portia, Beatrice, Hermione, Olivia, Juliet, Mrs. Ford, and

Miss Hardcastle	She Stoops to Conquer	Goldsmith, 1773
Maria	Citizen	Murphy, 1761
Miss Tittup	Bon Ton	Garrick, 1775
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Charlotte Rusport	West Indian	Cumberland, 1771
Berinthia	Trip to Scarborough	Sheridan, 1777
Mrs. Knightly	Discovery	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Mrs. Sullen	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Angelica	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Lydia Languish	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Bisarre	Inconstant	Farquhar, 1702
Belinda	Old Batchelor	Congreve, 1693
Lady Teazle	School for Scandal	Sheridan, 1777
Julia	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Millamant	Way of the World	Congreve, 1700

Etc., etc., etc.

MRS. JORDAN

b. *c.* 1762—d. 1816

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
Rosa	Strangers at Home	Cobb, 1785
Matilda	Richard Cœur de Lion	Burgoyne, 1786
Beatrice	Pannel	Kemble, 1788
Eleanor	Impostors	Cumberland, 1789
Aura	Farm House	Kemble, 1789
Helena	Love in Many Masks	Kemble, 1790
Augusta	Better Late Than Never	Andrews, 1790
Julia Wingrove	Fugitive	Richardson, 1792
Lady Contest	Wedding Day	Mrs. Inchbald, 1794
Sabina Rosny	First Love	Cumberland, 1795
Flavia	Vortigern	Ireland, 1796
Albina Mandeville	Will	Reynolds, 1797
Letitia Manfred	Last of the Family	Cumberland, 1797
Angela	Castle Spectre	Lewis, 1797
Susan	Knave or Not?	Holcroft, 1798
Rosa	Secret	Morris, 1799
Zorayda	East Indian	Lewis, 1799
Cora	Pizarro	Adapt. from Kotzebue by Sheridan, 1799
Julia	Indiscretion	Hoare, 1800
Eliza	Hear Both Sides	Holcroft, 1803
Emma	Marriage Promise	Allingham, 1803
Widow Cheerly	Soldier's Daughter	Cherry, 1804
Louisa Davenant	Sailor's Daughter	Cumberland, 1814
Lady Lovelace	Land We Live In	Holt, 1804 [1805
Mrs. Hamilton	School for Friends	Miss Chambers,
Helen Worrett	Man and Wife	Arnold, 1809
Also :—		
Rosalind, Viola, Imogen, Juliet, Ophelia, Beatrice, and		
Peggy	Country Girl	Garrick, 1766
Bellario	Philaster	Beaumont & Fletcher, 1668
Miss Hoyden	Relapse	Vanburgh, 1697

MRS. JORDAN—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Widow Brady	Irish Widow	Garrick, 1772
Miss Prue	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Nell	Devil to Pay	Coffey, 1731
Polly Honeycombe	Polly Honeycombe	Colman, 1760
Letitia Hardy	Belle's Stratagem	Mrs. Cowley, 1780
Rosetta	Foundling	Moore, 1748
Maria	Citizen	Murphy, 1761
Bisarre	Inconstant	Farquhar, 1702
Miss Hardcastle	She Stoops to Conquer	Goldsmith, 1773
Lady Bab Lardoon	High Life Below Stairs	Townley, 1759
Widow Bellmour	Way to Keep Him	Murphy, 1760

Etc., etc., etc.

MRS. SIDDONS

b. 1755—d. 1831

Original :—

Julia	Blackamoor Washed White	Bate, 1776
Maria	Love's Metamorphoses	Vaughan, 1776
Mrs. Montague	Fatal Interview	Hull, 1782
Matilda	Carmelite	Cumberland, 1784
Malvina	Captives	Dr. Delap, 1786
Julia	Julia, or Italian Lover	Jephson, 1787
Chelonice	Fate of Sparta	Mrs. Cowley, 1788
Dianora	Regent	Greathead, 1788
Mary Queen of Scots	Regent	St. John, 1789
Ariadne	Rival Sisters	Murphy, 1793
Countess Orsina	Emilia Galotti	Trans. from the German, 1794
Elgiva	Edwy and Elgiva	Attrib. to Mme. D'Arblay, 1795
Vitellia	Conspiracy	Jephson, 1796
Mrs. Haller	Stranger	From Kotzebue by Sheridan, 1798
Miranda	Aurelio and Mirando	Boaden, 1798
Countess of Montval	Castle of Montval	Whalley, 1799

MRS. SIDDONS—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Elvira	Pizarro	Adapt. from Kotzebue by Sheridan, 1799
Adelaide	Adelaide	Pye, 1800
Helena	Antonio, or Soldier's Return	Godwin, 1800
Agnes	Julian and Agnes	Sotheby, 1801

Also:—

Rosalind, Cleopatra, Juliet, Queen in "Hamlet," Portia, Imogen, Lady Macbeth, Desdemona, Queen Katharine, Constance, Ophelia, Cordelia,

and

Euphrasia	Philaster	Beaumont & Fletcher, 1668
Alicia	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Indiana	Conscious Lovers	Steele, 1722
Arpasia	Tamerlane	Rowe, 1702
Horatia	Roman Father	Whitehead, 1750
Lady Randolph	Douglas	Home, 1757
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682
Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Lady	Comus	Altered from Milton by Dr. Dalton, 1738
Julia	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Andromache	Distressed Mother	A. Phillips, 1712
Zara	Mourning Bride	Congreve, 1697
Zara	Zara	Aaron Hill, 1736
Countess of Narbonne	Count of Narbonne	Jephson, 1781

Etc., etc., etc.

MISS O'NEILL

b. 1791—d. 1872

Original:—

Florinda	Apostate	Sheil, 1817
Zimri	Retribution	Dillon, 1818
Adelaide	Adelaide	Sheil, 1816
Bellamira	Bellamira	Sheil, 1818
Evadne	Evadne	Sheil, 1819
Urilda	Fredolfo	Maturin, 1819

MISS O'NEILL—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Also :—		
JULIET, ISABELLA IN "MEASURE FOR MEASURE," QUEEN KATHARINE, CONSTANCE, DESDEMONA,		
	and	
Mrs. Beverley	Gamester	Moore, 1753
Mrs. Haller	Stranger	From Kotzebue, by Sheridan, 1798
Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Elwina	Percy	Hannah More, 1777
Monimia	Orphan	Otway, 1680
Belvidera	Venice Preserved	Otway, 1682
Calista	Fair Penitent	Rowe, 1703
Lady Teazle	School for Scandal	Sheridan, 1777
Mrs. Oakley	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761
Elvira	Spanish Fryar	Dryden, 1681
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Lady Randolph	Douglas	Home, 1757
Maria	Citizen	Murphy, 1761
	Etc., etc., etc.	

HELEN FAUCIT

b. 1817—d. 1898

Original :—

MARGARET	SEPARATION	JOANNA BAILLIE, 1836
FLORINDA	DON JOHN OF AUSTRIA	Trans. from French of Delavigne, 1836
LA VALLIERE	DUCHESSE DE LA VALLIERE	LYTTON, 1836
ERINA	BRIAN BOROIHME	SHERIDAN KNOWLES, 1811
LUCY, COUNTESS OF CARLISLE	STRAFFORD	BROWNING, 1837
PAULINE DESCHAPPELLES	LADY OF LYONS	LYTTON, 1838
ANGIOLINA	MARINO DALIERO	BYRON, 1838
CREUSA	ATHENIAN CAPTIVE	TALFOURD, 1838
HERO	WOMAN'S WIT	KNOWLES, 1838
VIOLET	SEA-CAPTAIN	LYTTON, 1839

HELEN FAUCIT—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Helen Campbell	Glencoe	Talfourd, 1840
Lady Dorothy Cromwell	Master Clarke	Serle, 1840
Clara Douglas	Money	Lytton, 1840
Nina Sforza	Nina Sforza	Troughton, 1841
Sophronia	Gisippus	Gerald Griffin, 1842
Maddelene	Plighted Troth	George Darley, 1842
Lady Mabel	Patrician's Daughter	Westland Marston, 1842
Mildred Tresham	Blot on the Scutcheon	Browning, 1843
Lady Laura Gaveston	Secretary	Knowles, 1843
Florence Delmar	Heart of the World	Westland Marston, 1847
Iolanthe	King Rene's Daughter	Trans. from Henrik Hertz, by Sir T. Martin, 1842
Colombe	Colombe's Birthday	Browning, 1853
Margaret	Love's Martyrdom	Saunders, 1855

Also :—

Portia, Constance, Desdemona, Katharina in "Taming of the Shrew," Beatrice, Queen Katharine in "Henry VIII," Imogen, Hermione, Rosalind, Cordelia, Miranda in "The Tempest," Juliet, Beatrice, Lady Macbeth, Ophelia,

and

Clemanthe	Ion	Talfourd, 1836
Mariana	Wife	Sheridan Knowles, 1833
Julia	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Lady	Comus	Altered from Milton, by Dr. Dalton, 1738
Julia	Hunchback	Knowles, 1833
Jane Shore	Jane Shore	Rowe, 1714
Lady Townly	Provoked Husband	Cibber, 1728
Mrs. Oakley	Jealous Wife	Colman, 1761

Etc., etc., etc.

ELLEN TREE (MRS. CHARLES KEAN)

b. 1805—d. 1880

Character.	Play.	Author.
Original :—		
Mavilla	Parricide	R. Allen, 1824
Mariana	Wife	Sheridan Knowles, 1833
Clemanthe	Ion	Talfourd, 1836
Countess	Love	Knowles, 1839
Isoline	John of Procida	Knowles, 1840
Olivia	Rose of Arragon	Knowles, 1842
Katherine Lorn	Strathmore	Westland Marston, 1849
Pauline	Pauline	Oxenford, 1851
Ann Blake	Ann Blake	Westland Marston, 1852
Dorothy Budd	St. Cupid	Jerrold, 1853
Myrrha	Sardanapalus	Byron, 1853

Also :—

Olivia, Viola, Desdemona, Hermione, Constance, Queen in "Richard II," Queen Katharine in "Henry VIII," and

Lydia Languish	Rivals	Sheridan, 1775
Charlotte	Hypocrite	Bickerstaffe, 1768
Laetitia Hardy	Belle's Stratagem	Mrs. Cowley, 1780
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Lady Teazle	School for Scandal	Sheridan, 1777
Albina Mandeville	Will	Reynolds, 1797
Miranda	Busybody	Mrs. Centlivre, 1709
Lady Elizabeth Freelove	Day After the Wedding	Mrs. C. Kemble, 1808
Miss Hardcastle	She Stoops to Conquer	Goldsmith, 1773
Angelica	Love for Love	Congreve, 1695
Susan	Black-eyed Susan	Jerrold, 1829

Etc., etc., etc.

MRS. POPE (Miss Younge)

b. 1774?—d. 1797

Original only :—		
Miss Dormer	Word to the Wise	Kelly, 1770
Emily	Maid of Kent	Waldron, 1773
Margaret	Margaret of Anjou	Jerningham, 1777

MRS. POPE—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Matilda	Battle of Hastings	Cumberland, 1778
Miss Boncour	Fathers	Fielding, 1778
Princess	Law of Lombardy	Jephson, 1779
Emmelina	Fatal Falsehood	Hannah More, 1779
Lady Rodolpha Lumbercourt	Man of the World	Macklin, 1781
Laetitia Hardy	Belle's Stratagem	Mrs. Cowley, 1780
Clara	Duplicity	Holcroft, 1781
Lady Bell Bloomer	Which is the Man?	Mrs. Cowley, 1782
Lady Davenant	Mysterious Husband	Cumberland, 1783
Sophia	Magic Picture (alteration of Massinger's Picture)	Bates, 1783
Miss Archer	More Ways than One	Mrs. Cowley, 1783
Susan	Follies of a Day	Holcroft, 1784
Charlotte	He Would be a Soldier	Pilon, 1786
Seraphina	Lorenzo	Merry, 1791
Cora	Columbus	Morton, 1792
Lady Eleanor Irwin	Everyone Has His Faults	Mrs. Inchbald, 1793
Lady Fancourt	Love's Frailties	Holcroft, 1794
Lady Ann Mordent	Deserted Daughter	Holcroft, 1795
Ellen Vortex	Cure for the Heartache	Morton, 1797

MRS. MATTOCKS

b. 1746—d. 1826

Original only :—

Lettice	Man and Wife	Bickerstaffe, 1762
Lucy Waters	Brothers	Murphy, 1763
Louisa	Duenna	Bickerstaffe, 1765
Lady Bell	Know Your Own Mind	Cumberland, 1765
Priscilla Tomboy	Romp	Bickerstaffe, 1767

MRS. MATTOCKS—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
Olivia	Good-natured Man	Goldsmith, 1768
Lady Tremor	Such Things Are	Colman, 1769
Betty Blackberry	Farmer	Cumberland, 1769
Marchioness Merida	Child of Nature	Sheridan, 1775
Mrs. Sarsnet	Deserted Daughter	Murphy, 1778
Nannette	Love's Frailties	Mrs. Cowley, 1780
Lucinda	Love in a Village	Mrs. Inchbald, [1787
Nancy	What We Must All Come To	O'Keefe, 1787
Theodosia	Maid of the Mill	Mrs. Inchbald, 1788
Amelia	Summer's Tale	Holcroft, 1795
Priscilla	Love in the City	Holcroft, 1794
Mrs. Racket	Belle's Stratagem	Mrs. Cowley, 1780

MISS POPE

b. 1742—d. 1818

Original only:—

Polly Honeycombe	Polly Honeycombe	Colman, 1760
Sophy	Musical Lady	Colman, 1762
Lady Flutter	Discovery	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Pompone	Elopement	Havard, 1763
Emily	Deuce is in Him	Colman, 1763
Miss Sterling	Clandestine Marriage	Colman, 1766
Lucy	Country Girl	Garrick, 1766
Molly	English Merchant	Colman, 1767
Miss Fuz	Peep Behind the Curtain	Attributed to Garrick, 1767
Lucetta	Wit's Last Stake	King, 1768
Patty	Maid of Kent	Waldron, 1773
Lucy	Choleric Man	Cumberland, 1774
Lady Minnikin	Bon Ton	Garrick, 1775
Mrs. Candour	School for Scandal	Sheridan, 1777
Tilburina	Critic	Sheridan, 1779
Mrs. Bromley	Times	Mrs. Griffiths, 1779

MISS POPE—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
PHILLIS	GENEROUS IMPOSTOR	O'BEIRNE, 1780
LADY BETTY WORMWOOD	REPARATION	ANDREWS, 1784
MRS. MODELEY	SEDUCTION	HOLCROFT, 1787
MRS. MUSHROOM	LOVE IN THE EAST	COBB, 1788
MRS. DOROTHY	IMPOSTORS	CUMBERLAND, 1789
LISETTE	FALSE APPEARANCES	Adapted from Frch. GEN. CONWAY, 1789
MRS. WRANGLE	FIRST LOVE	CUMBERLAND, 1795
LADY SWALLOW	WANDERING JEW	FRANKLIN, 1797
LADY COURTLAND	SCHOOL FOR FRIENDS	MISS CHAMBERS, 1805

MRS. DAVENPORT

b. 1765?—d. 1843

Original only:—

DEBORAH DOWLAS	HEIR-AT-LAW	COLMAN JUN., 1797
MRS. DAY	HONEST THIEVES	KNIGHT, 1797
DAME ASHFIELD	SPEED THE PLOUGH	MORTON, 1800
MRS. BRULGREDDERY	JOHN BULL	COLMAN JUN., 1803
MONICA	FOUNDLING OF THE FOREST	DIMOND, 1809
DAME GERTRUDE	FOREST OF BONDY	Attributed to [1814 HENRY HARRIS,
MISS VON FRUMP	SLAVE	MORTON, 1816

MRS. CHARLES KEMBLE

b. 1774—d. 1838

Original:—

JULIE	RICHARD CŒUR DE LION	BURGOYNE, 1786
LINDAMIRA	BOX LOBBY CHALLENGE	CUMBERLAND, 1794
FLORANTHE	MOUNTAINEERS	COLMAN JUN., 1793
JUDITH	IRON CHEST	COLMAN JUN., 1796
IRENE	BLUEBEARD	COLMAN JUN., 1798
MARIA	OF AGE TO-MORROW	Attributed to T. DIBDIN, 1800
ROSA	OBI	FAWCETT, 1800
THEODORE	DEAF AND DUMB	HOLCROFT, 1801

MRS. CHARLES KEMBLE—*continued*

Character.	Play.	Author.
THEODORE	WIFE OF TWO HUSBANDS	COBB, 1803
ARINETTE	YOUTH, LOVE, AND FOLLY	DIMOND, 1805
ELLEN	SLEEPING BEAUTY	Attributed to SKEFFINGTON, 1805
MORGIANA	FORTY THIEVES	WARD and COLMAN JUN., 1806
EDMUND	BLIND BOY	HEWETSON, 1807
LOTHAIRE	ADRIAN	DIMOND, 1806
LADY ELIZABETH	DAY AFTER THE WEDDING	MRS. C. KEMBLE, 1808
PERTILLA	STUDENTS OF SALAMANCA	JAMESON, 1813
MRS. TEMPLETON	EDUCATION	MORTON, 1813
LADY EMILY GERALD	SMILES AND TEARS	MRS. C. KEMBLE, 1815
MADGE WILDFIRE	HEART OF MIDLOTHIAN	TERRY and T. DIBDIN, 1819
ALADDIN	ALADDIN	STEPHENS, 1826

Also:—

PORTIA, DESDEMONA, OPHELIA, DORINDA IN "TEMPEST," MRS. FORD,

and

Flippanta	Confederacy	Vanburgh, 1705
Lucy	Recruiting Officer	Farquhar, 1706
Lucy Lockit	Beggar's Opera	John Gay, 1728
Sylvia	Recruiting Officer	Farquhar, 1706
Lady Fanciful	Provoked Wife	Vanburgh, 1697
Kitty	High Life Below Stairs	Townley, 1759
Flora	She Would and She Would Not	Cibber, 1702
Albina Mandeville	Will	Reynolds, 1797
Lady Teazle	School for Scandal	Sheridan, 1777
Bisarre	Inconstant	Farquhar, 1702
Maria	Citizen	Murphy, 1761
Mrs. Knightly	Discovery	Mrs. Sheridan, 1763
Clarissa	Confederacy	Vanburgh, 1705
Mrs. Sullen	Beaux' Stratagem	Farquhar, 1707
Violante	Wonder	Mrs. Centlivre, 1714
Nell	Devil to Pay	Coffey, 1731
Juliana	Honeymoon	Tobin, 1805

Etc., etc., etc.

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